CHICAGO RIVER CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT PLAN

City of Chicago
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Department of Planning and Development
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Contents

FOREWORD 1

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION
- Why a development plan for the Chicago River? 2
- Chicago River Development Goals 4
- Planning Process 6

CHAPTER TWO: THE PLAN
- Reaches and Opportunity Sites: 8
- 1. North Shore Channel 10
  - • Devon to Lawrence 12
  - • Bryn Mawr to Foster 14
- 2. Upper North Branch: City Limits to Cicero 16
- 3. Upper North Branch: Cicero to Lawrence 18
  - • Foster to Lawrence 20
- 4. Middle North Branch: Lawrence to Diversey 22
  - • Neighborhood Overlook Prototype - 1 24
  - • Neighborhood Overlook Prototype - 2 26
  - • Neighborhood River Edge Improvements Prototype 28
  - • Horner Park 30
  - • Irving Park to Addison 32
  - • Addison to Belmont 34
  - • Industrial Area Overlook 36
  - • Lathrop Riverwalk 38
- 5. Lower North Branch: Diversey to Chicago 40
  - • Damen to Fullerton 42
  - • Fullerton Plaza 44
  - • Union Pacific Railroad Bridge to Webster 46
  - • North Avenue Turning Basin 48
- 6. Downtown Main Branch: Chicago to Congress 50
  - • Erie Street Terraces 52
  - • North Branch Boardwalk 54
  - • Riverwalk Gateway 56
  - • Rush Street Park Improvements 58
  - • 300 South Wacker 60
  - • Wolf Point 62
- 7. South Branch Riverwalk: Congress to Halsted 64
- 8. South Branch: Halsted to Kedzie 66
  - • South Branch Turning Basin 68
  - • Canalport Riverwalk 70
- 9. Sanitary & Ship Canal: California to City Limits 72

CHAPTER THREE: IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES
- Overview & Setback ordinance 74
- Design Guidelines 76
- Capital Improvement Program 78
- Environmental Recommendations 79
- Public/Private River Development Corp. 82

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 83

BIBLIOGRAPHY 86

Foreword

In 1997, the Department of Planning and Development of the City of Chicago assembled a team representing the government, private sector developers, and non-profit organizations to create a blueprint for the future of the Chicago River. Their goal was to enhance the river's attractiveness as a natural and recreational resource, while respecting the needs of residential and business developments.

The Chicago River Corridor Development Plan and Design Guidelines are results of this collaborative effort. This ten-year action plan sets forth a shared vision for the river and outlines specific recommendations for achieving that vision.

Components of the plan include:

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES
Specific recommendations for improvements to public and private land that support the goals of the plan.

SETBACK ORDINANCE
Local legislation that provides for increased landscaped open space along the river.

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION AGENDA
Strategies for preserving and enhancing the river's natural areas.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The authors of this document hope that all who know and love the Chicago River will join in the thoughtful and sustainable development of this precious resource.

The Chicago River through downtown Chicago

Chapter One: Introduction

Why a Development Plan for the Chicago River?

The Chicago River is one of the city's most treasured and accessible natural resources, flowing through residential neighborhoods and industrial areas alike. Formerly those same industrial areas were sources of severe contamination of the river and its banks. But over the last 25 years, local and federal government agencies have invested more than $4 billion in pollution control and other water quality improvements. Both human residents and wildlife are returning to the river. More and more Chicagoans look to it as an attractive place to work, live, and play.

This renewed interest in the river is resulting in new kinds of development. Residential and commercial uses are replacing the more traditional industrial plants which once relied on the river for transportation of raw materials. Many of the remaining industrial uses are developing their waterfronts as amenities for their employees, with seating areas and green space. The City of Chicago created the Chicago River Corridor Development Plan and Design Guidelines as a vision and set of standards for new development that will increase public access and create new recreational opportunities for all the city's residents.

Fullerton Plaza overlook by the Chicago River

Chicago Riverwalk in Downtown Chicago

History

Chicago's phenomenal growth into a major urban center is due, in large part, to its strategic location on the Chicago River and Lake Michigan. As early as the 1600's the river and the lake were major trade routes.

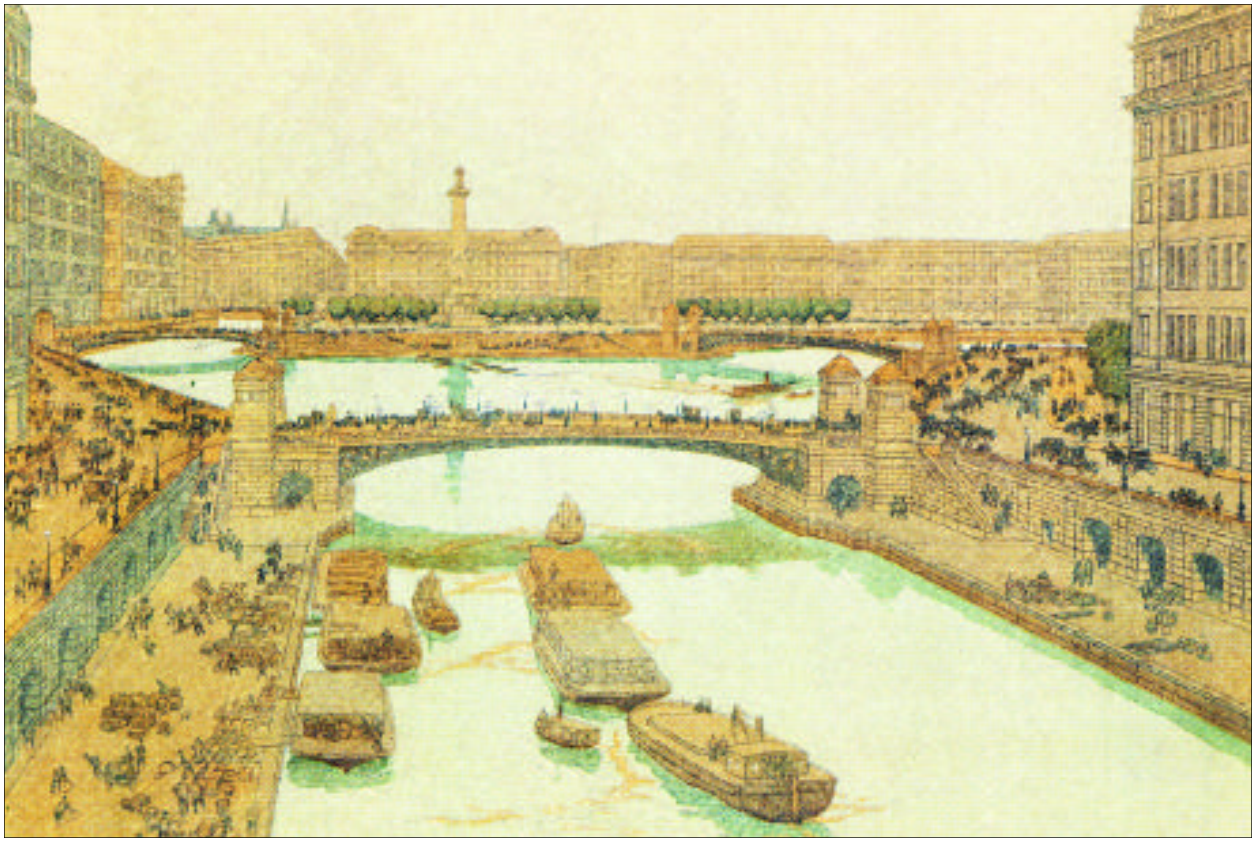
By the City's incorporation in 1836, the river had already been established as a desirable location for industrial development. The first meat packing plant adjacent to the river opened in 1829 and the first lumber mill in 1833. These two industries were located just north of Wolf Point at the confluence of the north and south branches of the Chicago River.

The completion of the Illinois and Michigan Canal in 1848 linked Lake Michigan with the Mississippi River, dramatically increasing river traffic. By the 1860's, the river had become the focus of industrial development with an emphasis on meat packing and lumber.

In the city's early history the river was also used as a sewage outlet. Waste flowed east to Lake Michigan, the city's drinking water source, resulting in frequent outbreaks of water-borne diseases. In 1890, the Sanitary and Ship Canal was built both to protect the water supply and to provide greater shipping capacity. The construction of the Canal reversed the flow of the river, sending pollution away from Lake Michigan and into the Mississippi River system. The Sanitary and Ship Canal also became the main materials transportation artery, replacing the obsolete Illinois and Michigan Canal which was eventually filled in.

Chicago's industrial legacy will likely remain a strong feature of development along the Chicago River, particularly along the South Branch and the Sanitary and Ship Canal. However, public demand for access and recreational amenities continues to grow, ensuring that future development will include a diverse mix of industrial, commercial, residential, and recreational uses.

Southeastward view of the Chicago River over Wolf Point around 1900



Burnham's vision for the Chicago River

Chicago River Development Goals

Five key components frame the Chicago River Corridor Development Plan and Design Guidelines:

1. PATHS AND GREENW AYS

Create a connected greenway along the river , with continuous multi-use paths along at least one side of the river .

- This can be accomplished through improvements to existing public paths and the creation of new path segments through private property.
- Beyond the city limits, the river path can be linked to existing and proposed paths such as the Lincolnwood Trail and the Illinois and Michigan Canal Corridor.

2. PUBLIC ACCESS

Increase public access to the river through the creation of overlooks and public parks.

- Where feasible, private developments along the river should include opportunities for public access, such as pocket parks with seating areas.
- Streets that dead-end at the river can be developed as overlooks for the adjacent community.

3. HABITAT AND LANDSCAPING

Restore and protect landscaping and natural habitats along the river, particularly fish habitat.

- Given the river's industrial history, little of its pre-settlement "natural" character remains. As redevelopment proceeds, care should be taken to create landscaped buffers and wetlands, both to soften harsh urban edges and to support wildlife.

4. RECREATION

Develop the river as a recreational amenity, attracting tourists and enhancing Chicago's image as a desirable place to live, work, and visit.

- Recommended recreational amenities include canoe and motorized boat launches, fishing piers, hiking and biking trails, and historical markers.

5. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Encourage economic development compatible with the river as an environmental and recreational amenity.

- Cafes, restaurants, and canoe rental concessions can be developed at many locations along the river.

- Existing industrial and commercial businesses should be encouraged to enhance their water fronts and create landscaped seating and picnic areas for their employees.

Planning Process

The Chicago River Corridor Development Plan was organized around three linked spheres of activities:
- The Steering Committee provided overall policy direction.
- Key partners and constituents contributed guidance on specific implementation strategies.
- A series of open houses held over a six-week period provided opportunities for public comment.

Steering Committee

The planning process was overseen by a Steering Committee whose members included representatives of government agencies, non-profit organizations, and developers with interests in river development and preservation.

The Steering Committee formed two sub-committees to address areas they felt required special attention:

The Setback Subcommittee was charged with developing policies regarding a landscaped "no-build" zone at the top of the bank for the length of the river. They recommended a 30-foot setback be required to allow increased public access to the river through a continuous path and greenway. This recommendation was included as an amendment to the City's existing Planned Development Ordinance, and was approved by the City Council on April 21, 1998. The complete text of the ordinance can be found in Chapter Three, page 71-72.

The Environmental Subcommittee drafted objectives and an action plan for habitat and landscape protection. The objectives included the creation and management of riveredge buffers, the development of a bank restoration program, the creation and preservation of riparian and aquatic habitats, water quality improvement, and improved public education on river issues. Riveredge buffer recommendations have been incorporated into the Chicago River Corridor Design Guidelines .

Key Public Sector Partners

Independently of the Steering Committee's work, the Chicago Department of Planning and Development (DPD) met with key agencies of local government. These agencies will be important financial and management partners in the implementation of the River Development Plan.

Chicago Park District (CPD), a local government body independent of the City, owns and manages 551 parks covering 7,300 acres. It enacts and enforces ordinances, rules and regulations for the protection of public property, initiates cultural, educational, and recreational programs, expands park space and beautifies existing park property.

Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) owns land along the waterways and the outlying areas along the channels, and is responsible for the collection, treatment, and disposal of waste water, as well as for the regulation of water levels.

Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) is the city government agency responsible for the design and construction of most of Chicago's roads, bridges and transit stations.

Chicago Department of the Environment (CDOE) has overall responsibility for advancing the City's environmental agenda to enhance the health of the urban ecosystem and all of its inhabitants. The department is also responsible for monitoring flood plain development compliance.

Cook County Forest Preserve District (CCFPD) is responsible for the environmental quality and recreational use of waterways within its boundaries. The District's mission is to protect and preserve the flora, fauna, and scenic beauties of Cook County.

In addition to the key government agencies, DPD met with representatives of Mayor Daley's Blue Ribbon Fishing Committee, who offered comments on proposed fishing pier locations and general fishing and boating policies.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Department of Planning and Development conducted a series of five open houses in river edge communities in March and April 1998. The overall plan for the river was presented at each, along with detailed descriptions of proposed improvements on adjacent reaches.

For a complete list of all committee members, participants and consultants, and their affiliations, see acknowledgements on pages 81-83.

Planning team members review river edge conditions

Chapter Two: THE PLAN

Reaches and Development Opportunity Sites

For the purposes of the Chicago River Corridor Development Plan, the river has been subdivided into nine reaches, contiguous stretches that share certain geographic characteristics. Many of the reaches also include Development Opportunity Sites that have specific characteristics that make them good locations for public open space investment.

REACHES *(from north to south)*

1. NORTH SHORE CHANNEL:
DEVON AVENUE TO LAWRENCE AVENUE
This man-made canal connects the North Branch of the Chicago River with the northern suburbs and Lake Michigan at Wilmette Harbor. Adjacent land is publicly owned, and surrounding uses are largely residential, with limited industrial and commercial uses.

2. UPPER NORTH BRANCH:
CITY LIMITS TO CICERO AVENUE
In this section, the North Branch of the Chicago River runs through land entirely owned by the Forest Preserve District of Cook County. The banks and channel remain natural in character, and surrounding uses are recreational and residential.

3. UPPER NORTH BRANCH:
CICERO AVENUE TO LAWRENCE AVENUE
Here, the river retains its natural character as the surrounding uses change from public open space on the west to low-density residential on the east, where the river joins the North Shore Channel.

4. MIDDLE NORTH BRANCH:
LAWRENCE AVENUE TO DIVERSEY AVENUE
This section of the river is a zone of transition. North of Belmont, several large parks provide recreational access. South of Belmont, rapidly changing land uses are creating a mix of residential, commercial, and industrial development with limited opportunities for public access.

5. LOWER NORTH BRANCH:
DIVERSEY AVENUE TO CHICAGO AVENUE
Although this reach is predominantly zoned for manufacturing and related uses, commercial uses have been making inroads at the river's edge. Public access to the water's edge is extremely limited.

6. DOWNTOWN MAIN BRANCH:
CHICAGO AVENUE TO CONGRESS PARKWAY
The river's main branch is a focal point for high-rise office, hotel and residential development. Prospects for increased public access are strong as public plazas and riverwalks are integrated into the designs for many developments.

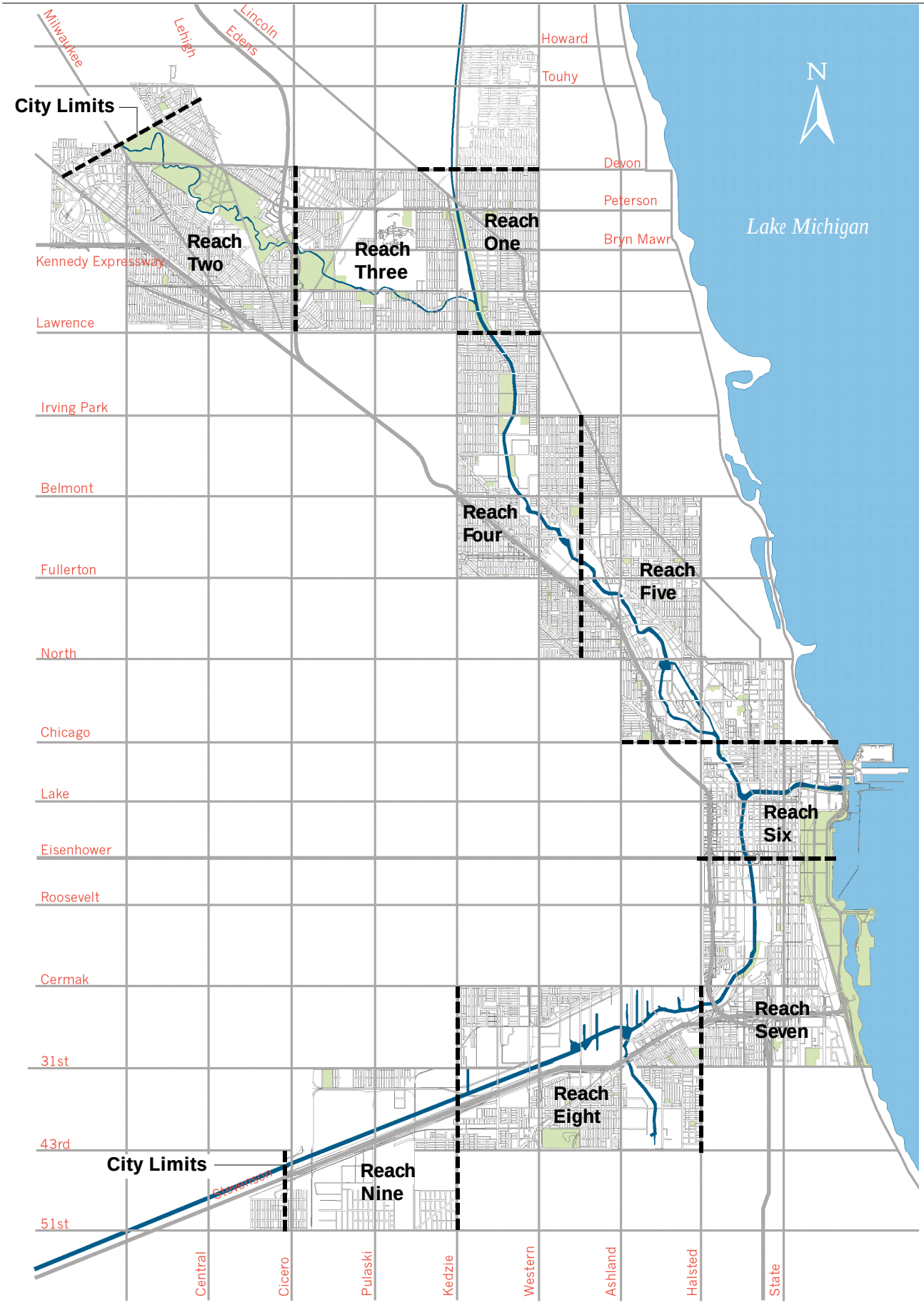
7. SOUTH BRANCH RIVERWALK:
CONGRESS PARKWAY TO HALSTED STREET
Like the Middle North Branch, this reach is a zone of transition, in this case, between the high-rise commercial and residential development north of Roosevelt Road and the traditional industrial uses to the south. Open space is limited in nearby residential areas.

8. SOUTH BRANCH:
HALSTED STREET TO KEDZIE AVENUE
The South Branch runs through one of the city's most robust industrial areas, including the Pilsen Model Industrial Corridor. Access to the water's edge is limited, but demand for open space is high due to the lack of parks and playgrounds in the surrounding residential communities.

9. SANITARY & SHIP CANAL:
CALIFORNIA AVENUE TO THE CITY LIMITS
In contrast to the North Shore Channel, the publicly owned land along this reach is leased to commercial and industrial users, limiting public access. As elsewhere on the southernmost reaches, open space is limited in nearby residential areas.

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY SITES

Across the nine reaches of the river, the plan has identified 22 Opportunity Sites. For each of the sites, specific recommendations have been made for developments that would meet one or more of the five goals of the plan.


Milwaukee
Lehigh
Lincoln
Edens
Howard
Touhy
City Limits
Devon
Peterson
Bryn Mawr
Lake Michigan
N
Reach One
Reach Two
Reach Three
Kennedy Expressway
Lawrence
Irving Park
Belmont
Reach Four
Reach Five
Fullerton
North
Chicago
Lake
Reach Six
Eisenhower
Roosevelt
Cermak
Reach Seven
31st
Reach Eight
43rd
City Limits
Reach Nine
51st
Central
Cicero
Pulaski
Kedzie
Western
Ashland
Halsted
State

Reach One

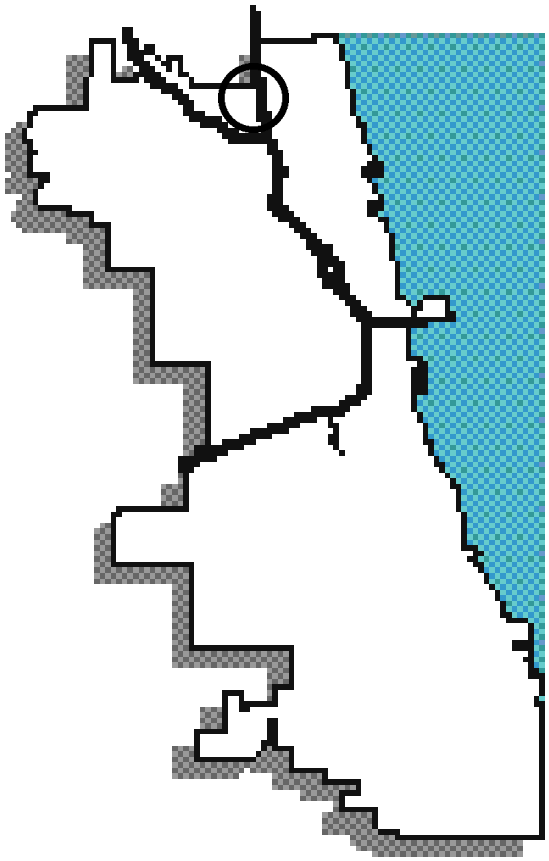
North Shore Channel: Devon Avenue to Lawrence Avenue

GOALS:
- Upgrade and extend paths through publicly owned land.
- Improve under- and over-bridge path connections.
- Make high-traffic streets safer for pedestrians and cyclists to cross.
- Improve connections to the existing on-street bike path system.
- Improve connections to the suburban path system.

CHARACTERISTICS :
- The Channel is navigable by canoe and motor boat for its entire length, but has no navigation outlet to Lake Michigan at Wilmette Harbor, its northern terminus.
- It features seven miles of non-contiguous bike trail segments.
- All water-edge parcels are owned by the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) although some are currently leased to private users.
- Existing river edges appear “natural” and include habitat for migrating waterfowl such as the endangered Black Crowned Night Heron.
- The surrounding community is largely residential, with limited commercial and industrial uses.

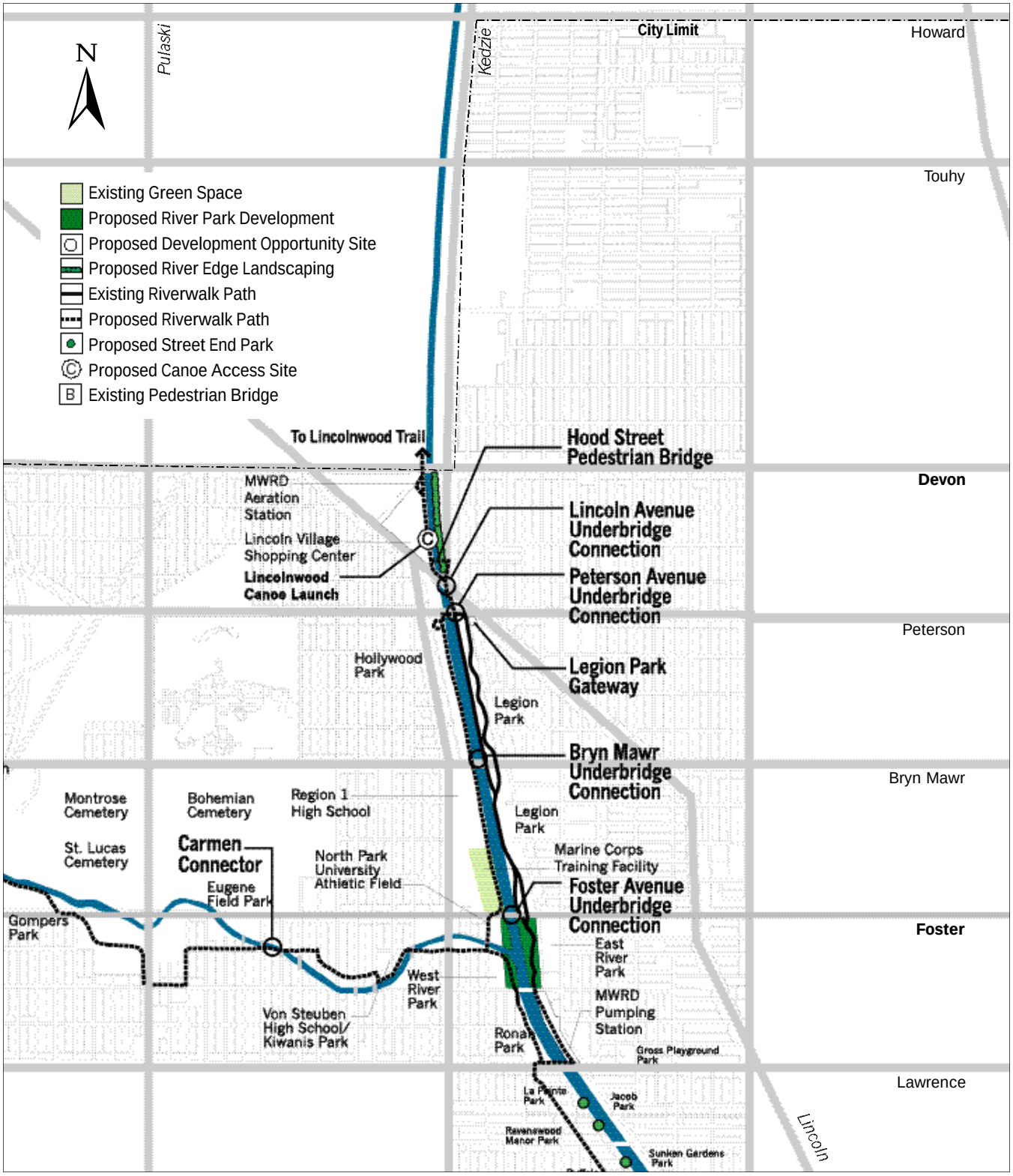
CONSTRAINTS :
- High traffic volume on cross streets makes access and crossing difficult.
- Water-edge parcels are narrow, limiting their usefulness as recreational areas.
- Steep banks are hazardous and limit access.

OPPORTUNITIES :
- The potential path can be connected to paved trails beyond the city limits in Skokie, Evanston and Lincolnwood.
- Several MWRD leases will expire in the next 10 to 20 years, allowing land to revert to public use.



OPPORTUNITY SITES:

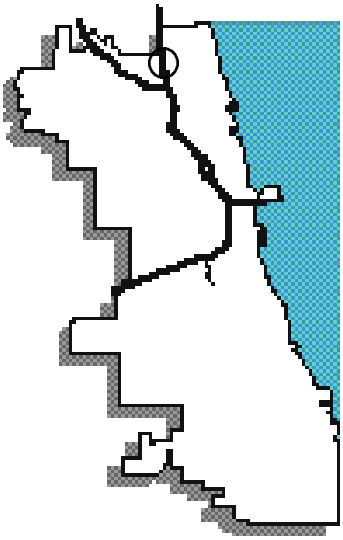
- Devon Avenue to Peterson Avenue
- Bryn Mawr Avenue to Foster Avenue



Reach One: North Shore Channel - Devon Avenue to Lawrence Avenue

Devon to Peterson

View of Peterson Bridge



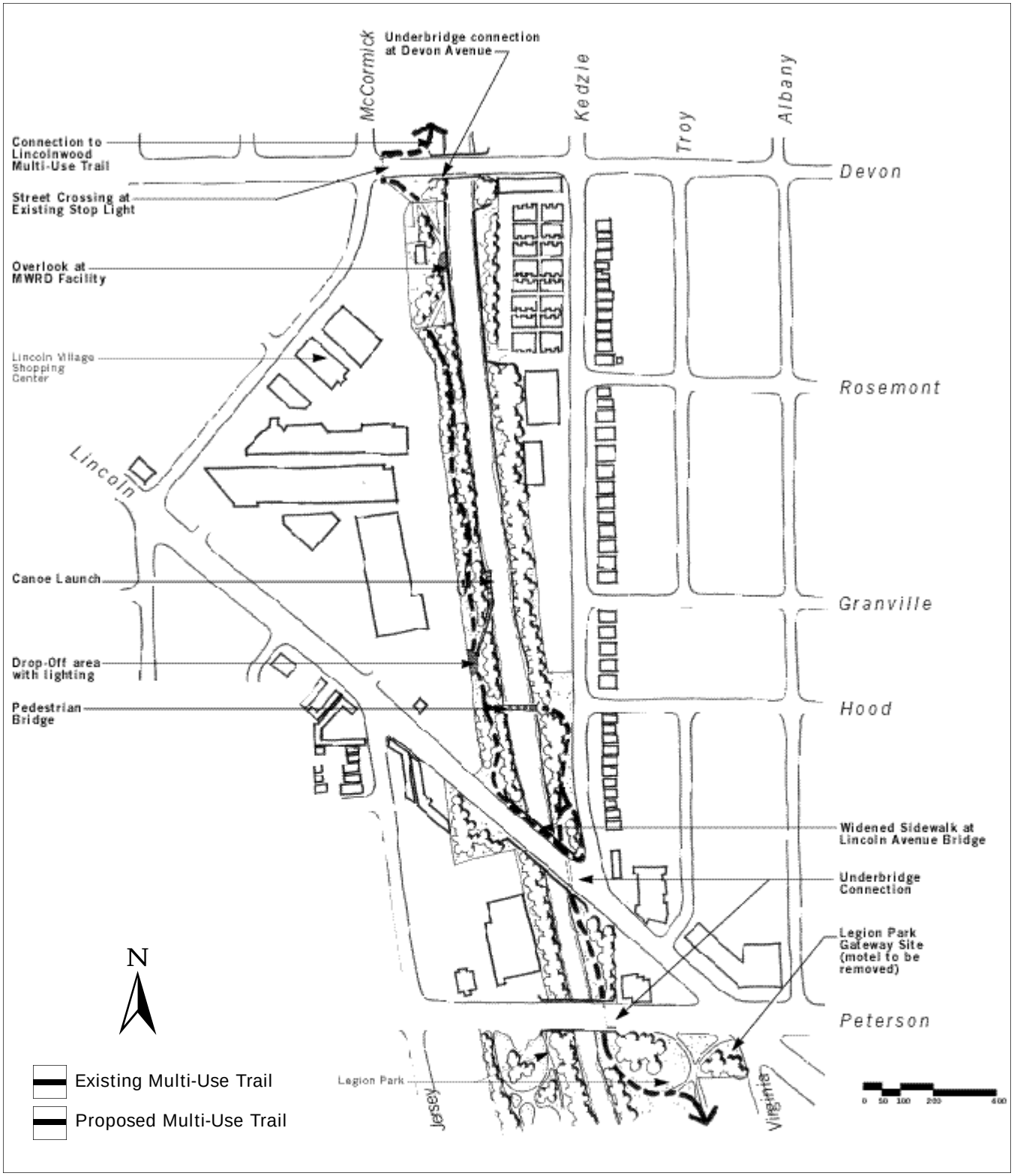
Devon Avenue forms the border between Chicago and the village of Lincolnwood to the north. The MWRD-owned land along both banks of the North Shore Channel south to Peterson Avenue is popular with cyclists and anglers. This plan calls for completing the existing multi-use path, and linking it both to the northern suburbs and the residential community to the east. Cyclists and pedestrians will be able to use underbridge connections to avoid crossing high-traffic streets, while improved path lighting will heighten visitor security. New recreational destination points include an overlook and a canoe launch.

Proposed Improvements

Paths:
- Connect the path to the Lincolnwood multi-use trail north of Devon.
- Create an underbridge connection at Devon Avenue east of McCormick Boulevard.
- Create a path through the MWRD aeration facility south of Devon Avenue.
- Upgrade and widen the path adjacent to the Lincoln Village Shopping Center parking lot.
- Link the east and west banks north of Lincoln Avenue with a pedestrian bridge at Hood Street or create a bike lane and widen the sidewalk on the north side of the Lincoln Avenue bridge.
- Build underbridge connections at Lincoln and Peterson on the east bank.

River Access:
- Build an overlook with a sitting area at the MWRD aeration facility south of Devon.
- Create a canoe launch adjacent to the Lincoln Village Shopping Center parking lot.
- Provide adequate lighting along the entire path.

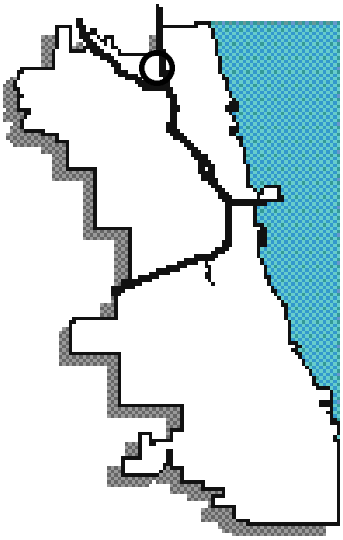
Recreation:
- Create a continuous bike path that allows cyclists to avoid crossing busy streets by using underbridge connections.
- Connect the west bank bike path with the neighboring community to the east with a pedestrian bridge at Hood Street.



North Shore Channel: Devon to Peterson

Bryn Mawr to Foster

Existing conditions under Bryn Mawr Bridge



As elsewhere along the North Shore Channel, this section is flanked by publicly owned land. Legion Park runs the length of the east bank. On the west, plans for a new 14-acre Region One High School campus include open space at the water's edge, providing a major link in the riverwalk. This plan proposes improvements to the existing multi-use trail and a new nature trail through Legion Park. Cyclists and pedestrians will be able to use underbridge connections to avoid crossing high-traffic streets.

Proposed Improvements

Paths:

- Improve the existing path on the east bank.
- Create a safe street crossing between the north and south sections of Legion Park at Bryn Mawr.
- Create a water-edge nature trail on the east bank through Legion Park.
- Create an underbridge connection on the west bank at Bryn Mawr.
- Create an on-street connection between the path north of Foster and the Albany Street pedestrian bridge.
- Create an underbridge connection on the east bank at Foster Avenue.
- Improve the midblock crosswalk at Foster Avenue.
- Create a new pedestrian path on the west bank adjacent to the Marine Corps and North Park University property south to the Waterfall.

River Access:

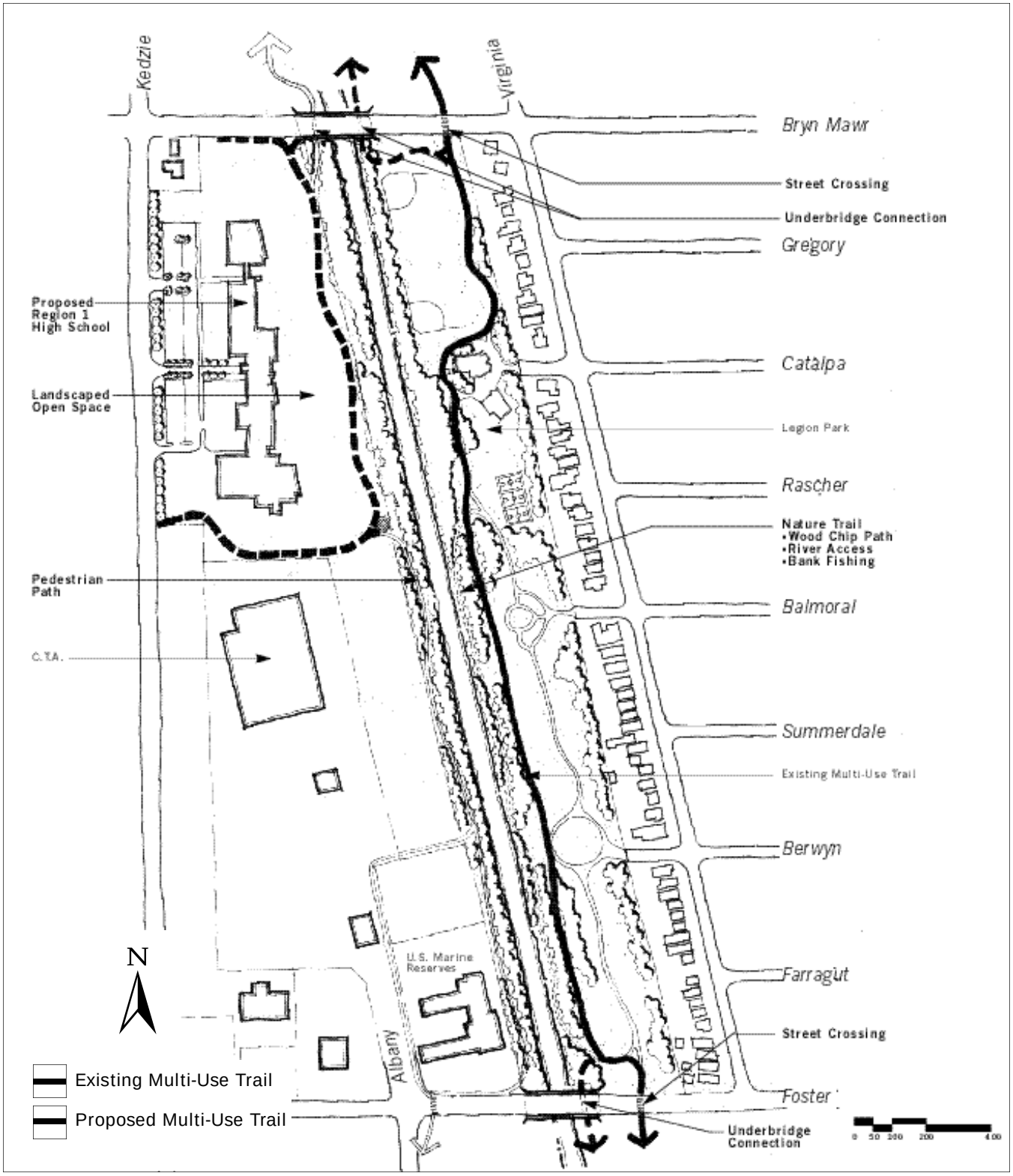
- Create a water-edge nature trail on the east bank through Legion Park.
- Connect the existing multi-use path to the adjacent neighborhood at Legion Park.

Habitat & Landscaping:

- Regrade as necessary to control erosion.
- Remove debris and invasive plant species.
- Replant with native plant species.
- Screen parking area with street trees.

Recreation:

- Clear areas for bank fishing along the east bank nature trail.
- Create a continuous bike path that allows cyclists to avoid crossing busy streets by using underbridge connections.
- Incorporate recreation fields and open space at the Region One High School site on the west bank.

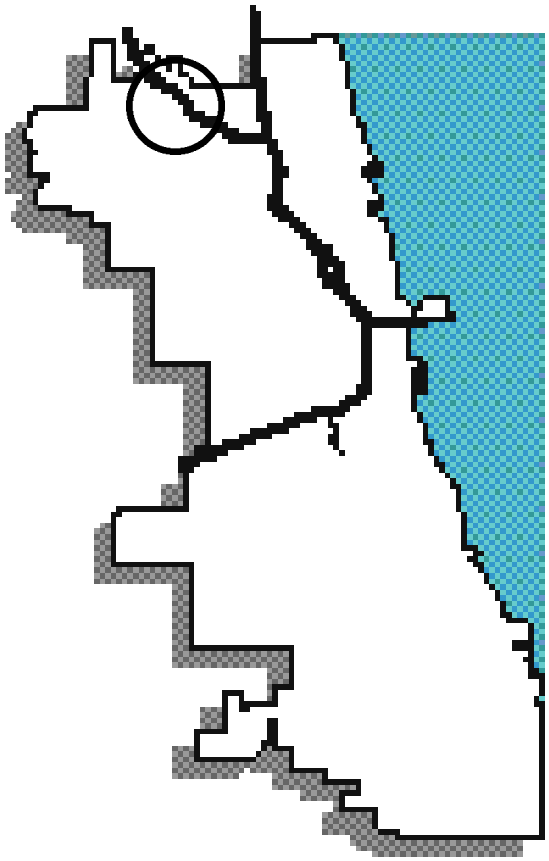


North Shore Channel: Bryn Mawr to Foster

Reach Two

Upper North Branch: City Limits to Cicero Avenue

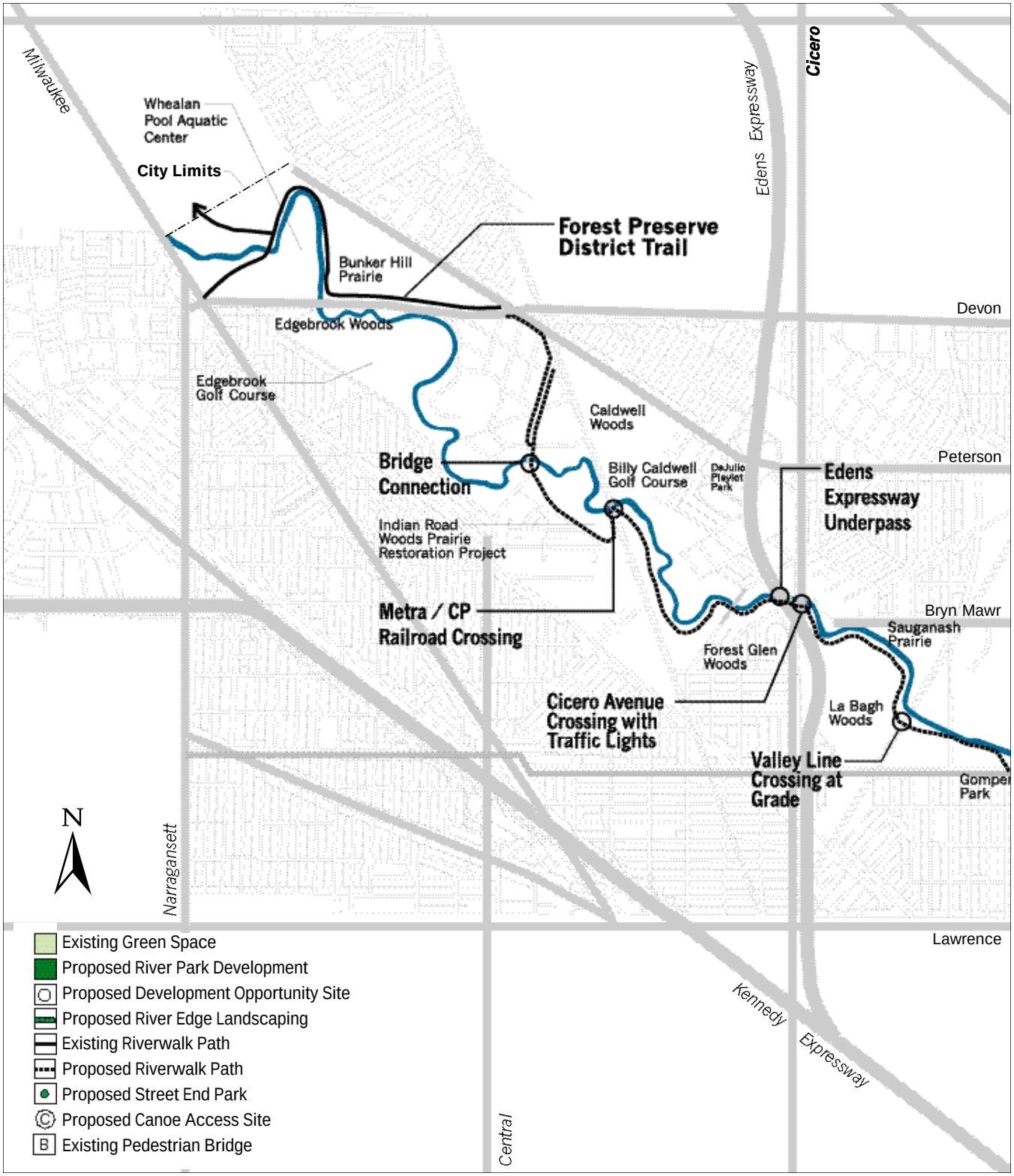
GOALS:
- Upgrade and extend paths through publicly owned land.
- Improve under- and over-bridge path connections.
- Make high-traffic streets safer for pedestrians and cyclists to cross, particularly at Cicero Avenue.
- Create safe grade crossings at rail lines.
- Improve connections to the existing on-street bike path system.
- Connect the existing trail to the North Branch Bicycle Trail.
- Improve access to the river for boaters and canoers.



CHARACTERISTICS :
- This reach runs through Cook County Forest Preserve District land.
- Banks and channel remain natural in character.
- The river is accessible by boat and canoe most of the year.

CONSTRAINTS :
- Golf courses and floodplains limit routes for paths adjacent to the river.
- Bank vegetation is often washed away by stormwater runoff and high water.
- A Forest Preserve District landscape restoration moratorium is in effect, limiting development and tree relocation.

OPPORTUNITIES :
- Trail segments exist through the forest preserves.
- Numerous ecological restoration sites include the seven North Branch Prairie project sites.
- Adjacent recreational opportunities include golf courses, swimming pools and toboggan slides.



Reach Two: Upper North Branch - City Limits to Cicero Avenue

Reach Three

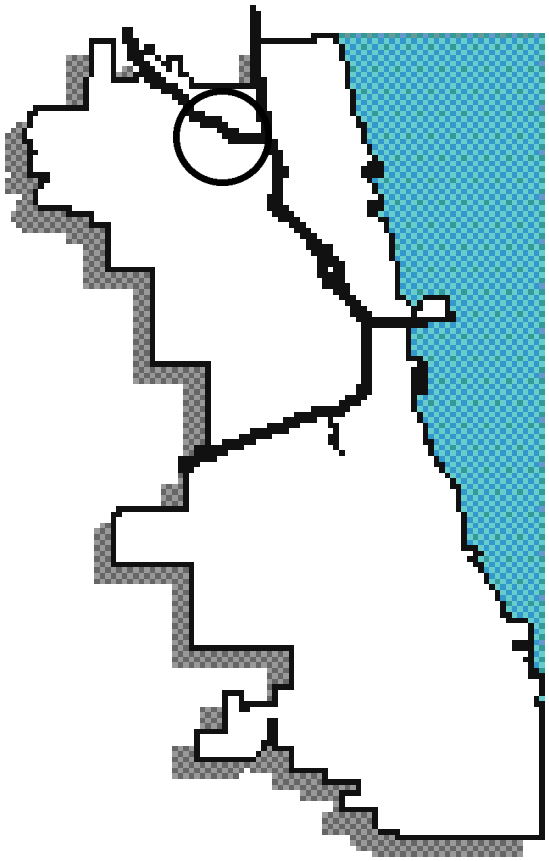
Upper North Branch: Cicero Avenue to Lawrence Avenue

GOALS:
- Upgrade and extend paths through publicly owned land.
- Improve under- and over-bridge path connections.
- Make high-traffic streets safer for pedestrians and cyclists to cross.
- Improve connections to the existing on-street bike path system.
- Increase access to the river for canoers.

CHARACTERISTICS :
- Much of the river is bordered by open space, including forest preserves and parks.
- Residential neighborhoods adjoin the river at several points.
- Banks and channel remain natural in character.
- The river is accessible by boat and canoe most of the year.

CONSTRAINTS :
- The river is fenced off through most Chicago Park District parks.
- Bank vegetation is often washed away by stormwater runoff and high water.

OPPORTUNITIES :
- Trail segments exist through parks and forest preserves.
- Most river-edge land is publicly owned.
- State funding and concept are in place for development of a path between Ronan Park and Eugene Field Park.



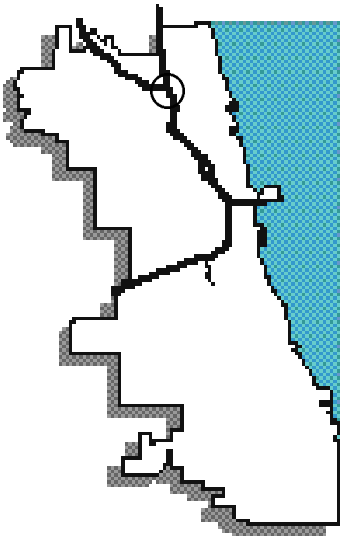
OPPORTUNITY SITE:

FOSTER TO LAWRENCE

Reach Three: Upper North Branch - Cicero Avenue to Lawrence Avenue

Foster to Lawrence

View of the Waterfall from West River Park



The North Shore Channel and the North Branch of the Chicago River come together at the Waterfall, which was built early in this century by the Metropolitan Sanitary District. It is popular with anglers; canoeists currently use an informal launch at Albany Street. The plan proposes enhancing these uses and increasing access to the water's edge. Riveredge land is owned by the MWRD or the Chicago Park District. Land north of the North Branch and west of the North Shore Channel is leased by North Park University for use as an athletic field.

Proposed Improvements

Paths:

- Link the multi-use path on the east bank with an underbridge connection and/or an improved street crossing at Foster Avenue.
- Extend the North Branch multi-use trail west with a connection at Carmen Street.
- Realign the path through West River Park.
- Complete the path through Ronan Park.
- Extend the path south from East River Park through the MWRD property to Lawrence Avenue.

River Access:

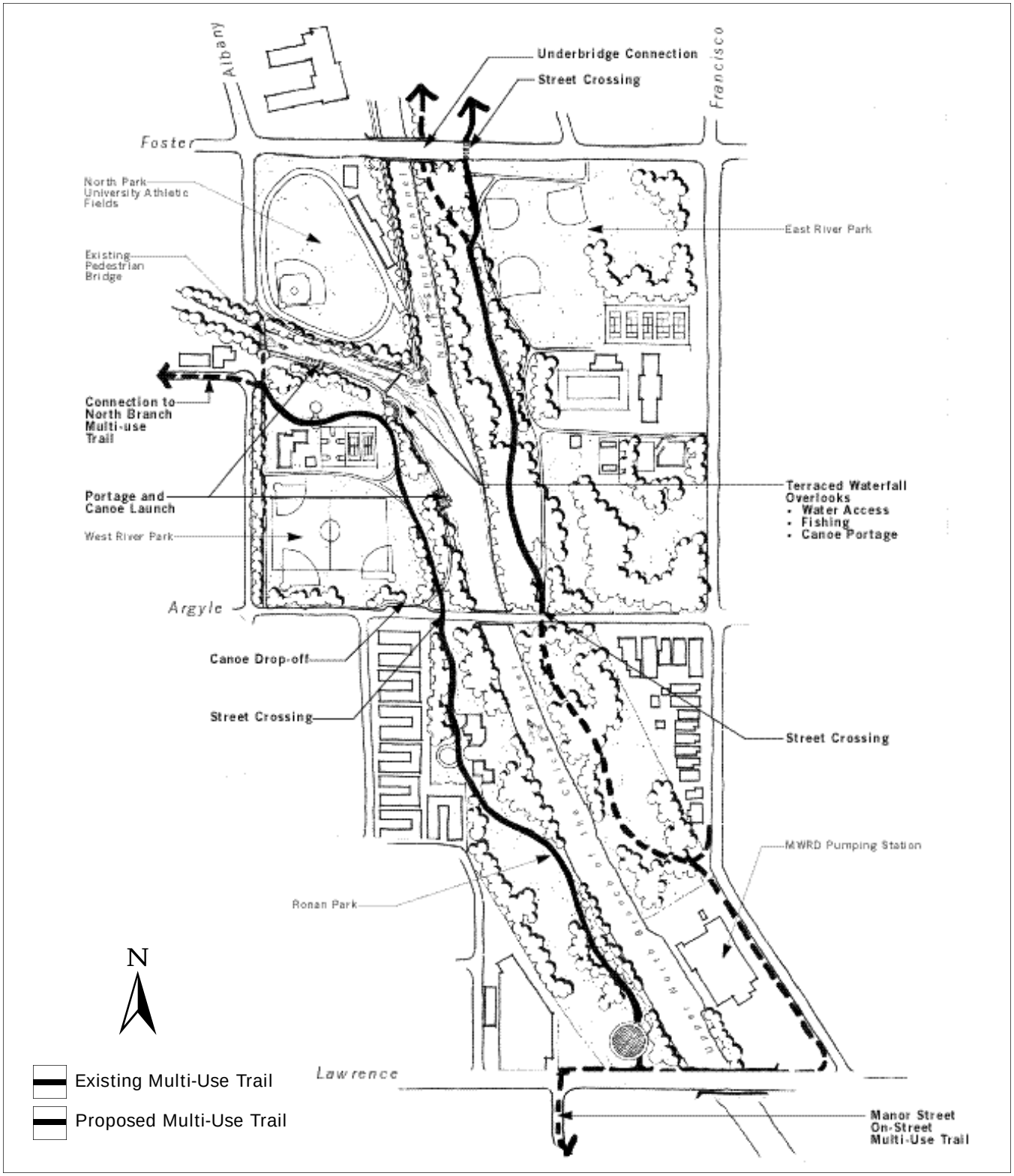
- Create overlooks with terraces to the water's edge on either side of the waterfall.
- Build a ramp from Argyle Street to a new canoe launch in West River Park.
- Build a ramp from Albany Street to a new canoe launch on the upper North Branch.
- Continue water-edge portage path between the canoe launches.

Habitat & Landscaping :

- Improve aquatic habitat with plants, underwater structures and a sheltered bank.

Recreation:

- Build a ramp from Argyle Street to the canoe launch in West River Park.
- Build a ramp from Albany Street to the canoe launch on the upper North Branch.
- Continue the water-edge portage path between canoe launches.
- Improve access and opportunities for fishing.
- Improve access and opportunities for sitting at the water's edge.
- Rebuild the waterfall and create a safe run for small craft over structure.
- Create a pull-over and drop-off point for canoes at Argyle and Albany streets.



Upper North Branch: Foster to Lawrence

Reach Four

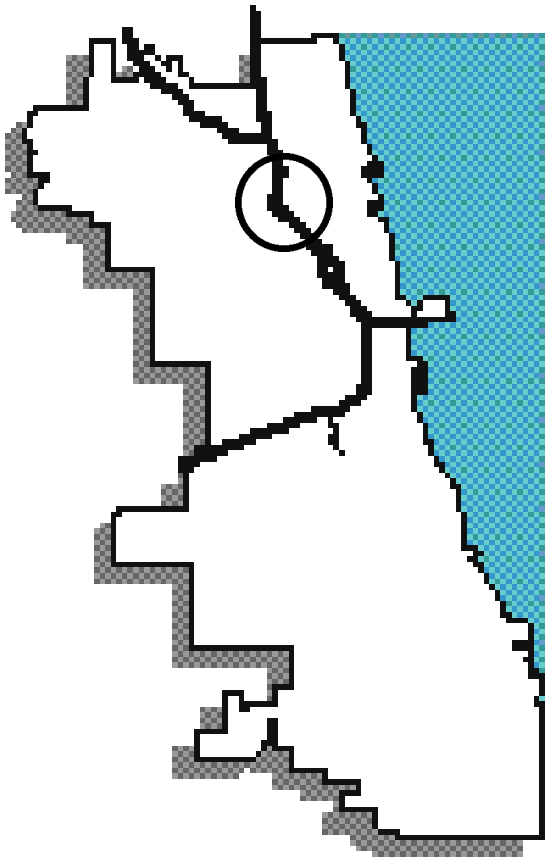
Middle North Branch: Lawrence Avenue to Damen Avenue

GOALS:
- Upgrade and extend paths through publicly owned land.
- Increase public access to the river.
- Create additional recreational areas.
- Create greenway through business areas and residential neighborhoods.
- Complete the greenway on setbacks on privately owned land.

CHARACTERISTICS:
- Rapidly changing land uses are creating a mix of residential, commercial and industrial development.
- Land values are increasing as up-scale housing and commercial development occur.

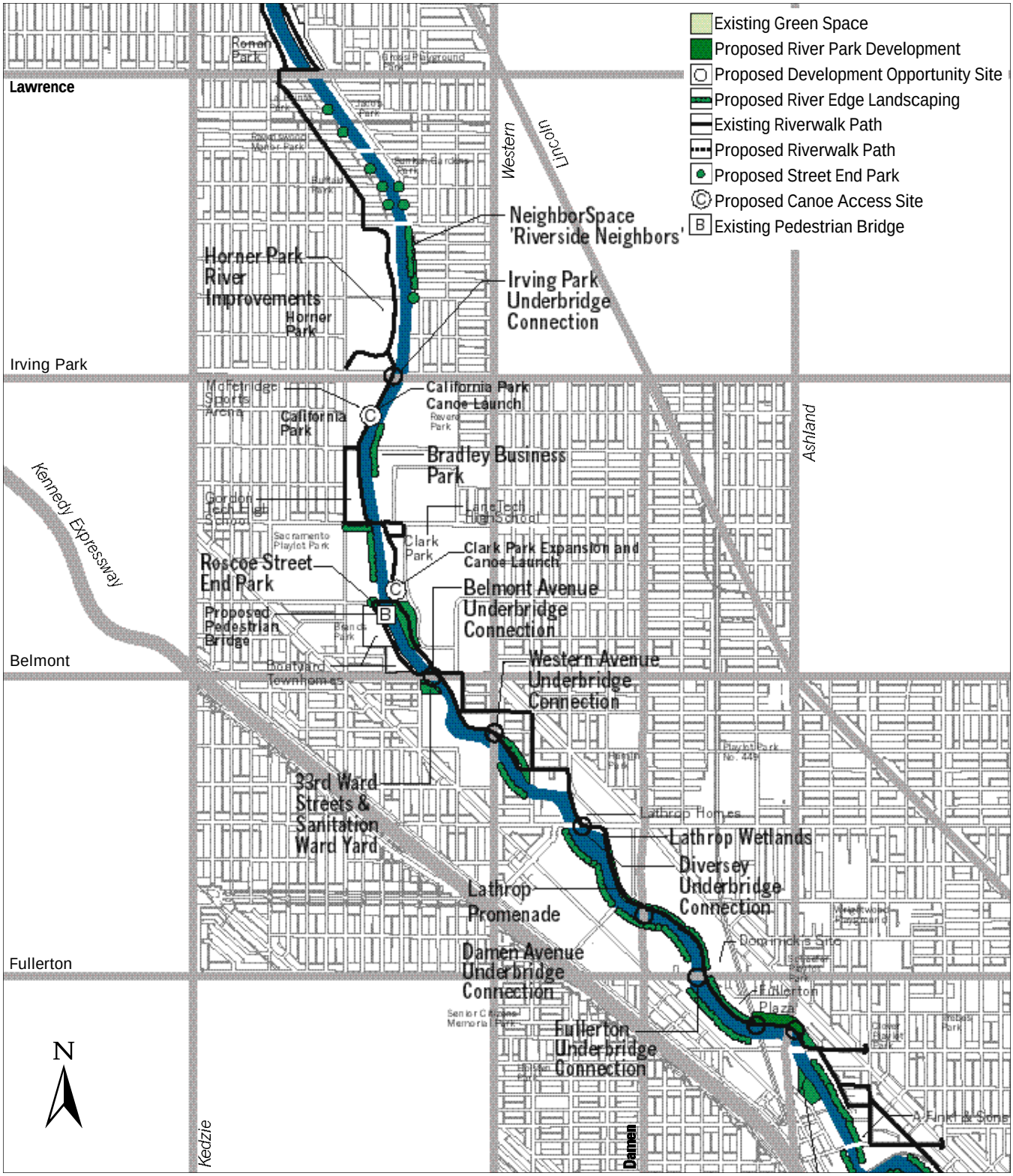
CONSTRAINTS:
- The river is fenced off through most Chicago Park District parks. High land values impede acquisition for public purposes.
- Banks are often used as extensions of existing back yards, with boat docks and other structures common.

OPPORTUNITIES:
- Many streets dead-end at the water's edge, creating opportunities for overlooks and access.
- River access can be included in project plans as new development occurs.
- Horner, California and Clark parks provide excellent access.
- A City-owned ward yard on the west bank south of Belmont provides a high visibility bank stabilization and green-up opportunity.



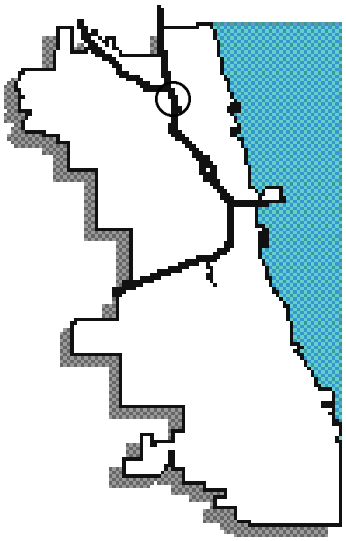
OPPORTUNITY SITES:

- NEIGHBORHOOD OVERLOOK PROTOTYPES
- NEIGHBORHOOD RIVER EDGE IMPROVEMENTS PROTOTYPE
- HORNER PARK
- IRVING TO ADDISON
- ADDISON TO BELMONT
- INDUSTRIAL AREA OVERLOOK
- LATHROP RIVERWALK



Reach Four: Middle North Branch - Lawrence Avenue to Damen Avenue

Neighborhood Overlook: Prototype 1



Many residential streets dead-end at the North Branch of the Chicago River. These dead ends are good locations for small open spaces that serve the neighboring community. This design and the one that follows are proposed for a typical street end in Ravenswood Manor, where the public right-of way meets the river at an angle. The first design envisions an overlook and ramp access to the water's edge.

Proposed Improvements

Paths:

- Connect the overlook to the existing neighborhood sidewalk system.

River Access:

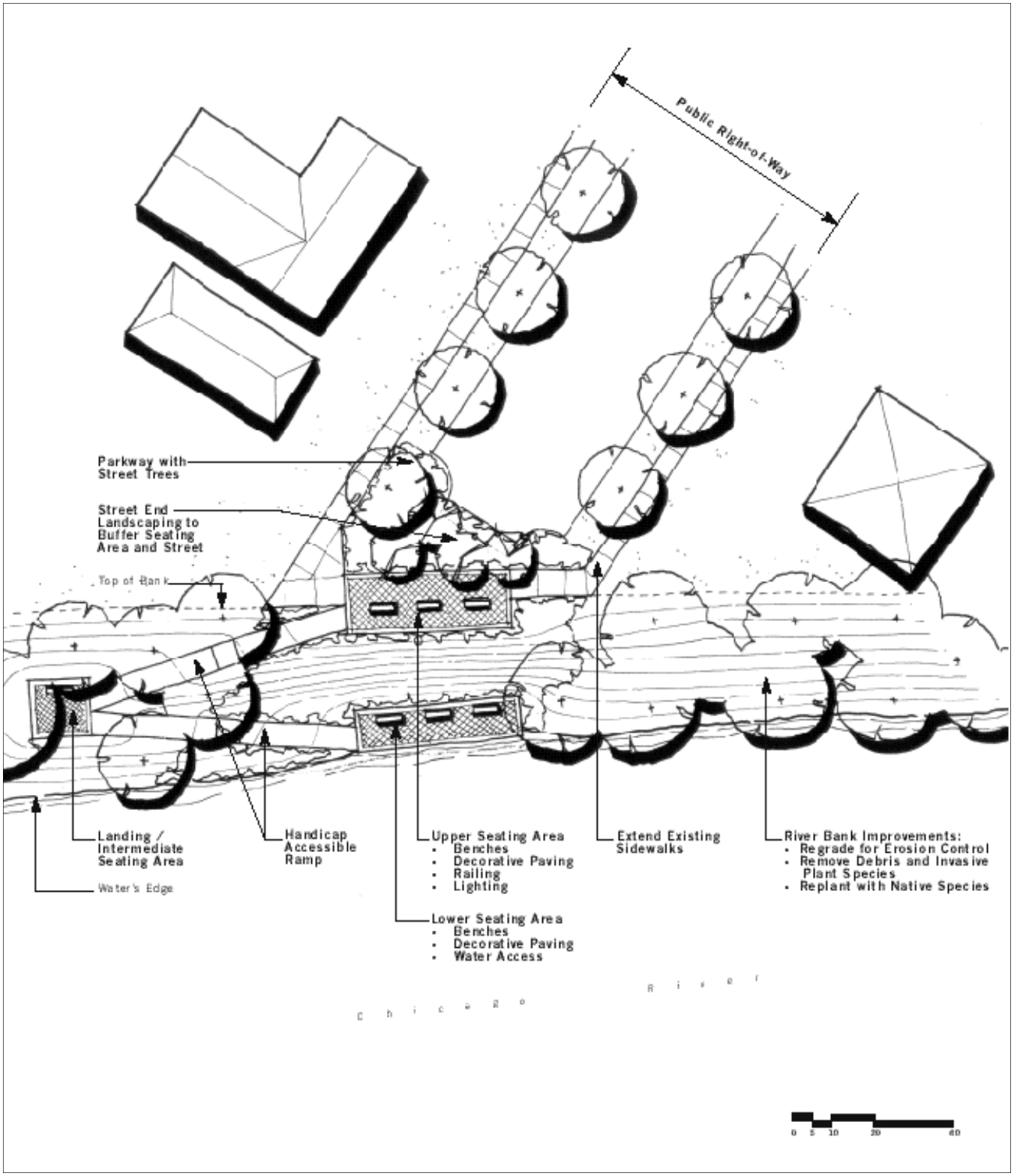
- Build a railed overlook with seating, lighting and decorative paving at the top of the bank.
- Improve access to the water's edge with an accessible ramp with an intermediate landing.
- Build a paved lower seating area at the water's edge.

Habitat & Landscaping:

- Substitute landscaping for usual hard barriers at the street end.
- Regrade as necessary to control erosion.
- Remove debris and invasive plant species.
- Replant with native species.

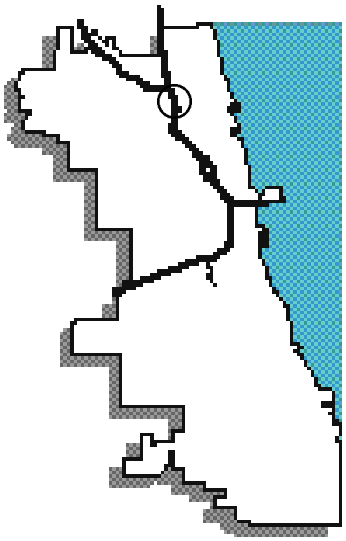
Recreation:

- Provide access for anglers at the lower seating area.
- Provide a boat tie-up at the water's edge.



Middle North Branch: Neighborhood Overlook Prototype - 1

Neighborhood Overlook: Prototype 2



This alternative design for an angled residential street end limits access to the top of the bank. The paved and lighted overlook includes seating and enhanced landscaping.

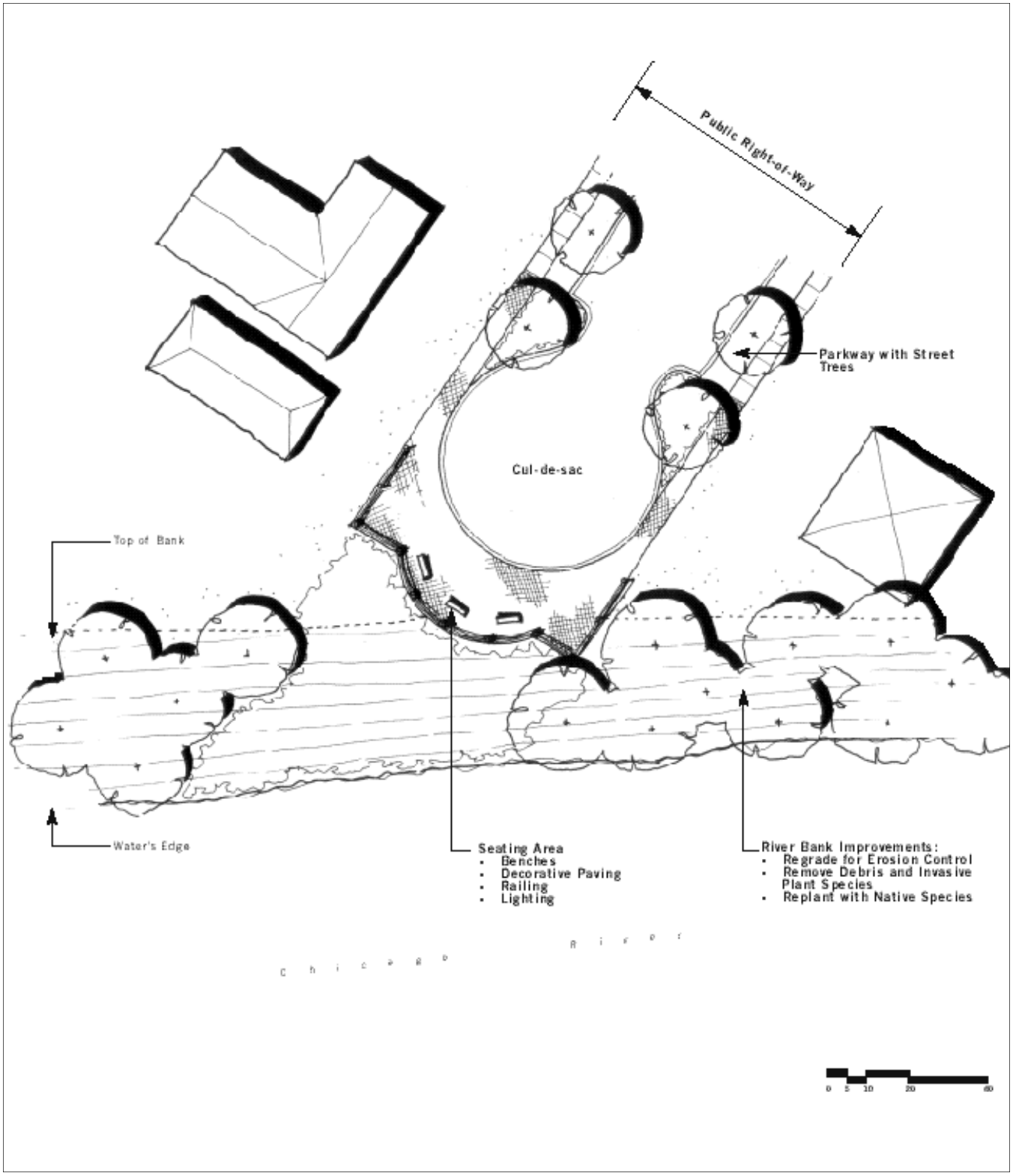
PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

PATHS:
- Connect the overlook to the existing neighborhood sidewalk system.

RIVER ACCESS:
- Build a railed overlook with seating, lighting and decorative paving at the top of the bank.

HABITAT & LANDSCAPING:
- Regrade as necessary to control erosion.
- Remove debris and invasive plant species.
- Replant with native species.

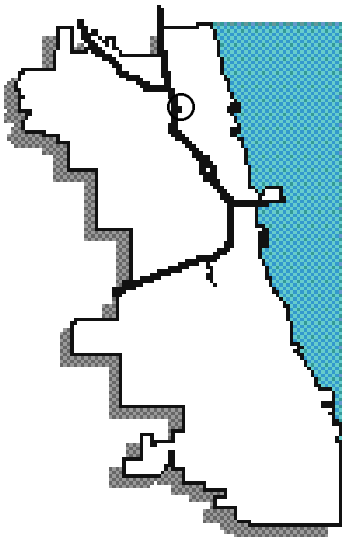
RECREATION:
- Build an overlook with seating at the top of the bank and views of the river.



Middle North Branch: Neighborhood Overlook Prototype - 2

Neighborhood River Edge Improvements

Riverbank restoration on Berteau Street



This NeighborSpace site , across the river from Horner Park, is an outstanding example of community-supported open space. The site was developed through a partnership between local residents, the City of Chicago, Friends of the Chicago River, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District, and the Chicago Park District. Steps lead to a small boat dock, and wood-chip paths meander between shaded overlooks and fishing sites. Existing street lighting enhances site security like the designs for street-end parks at Ravenswood Manor and Roscoe Street, this is designed as a neighborhood, rather than a regional, destination. The recommended improvements can be adapted to other residential streets that dead-end at the river.

Proposed Improvements

Paths:

- Build a wood chip path at the water's edge.

River Access:

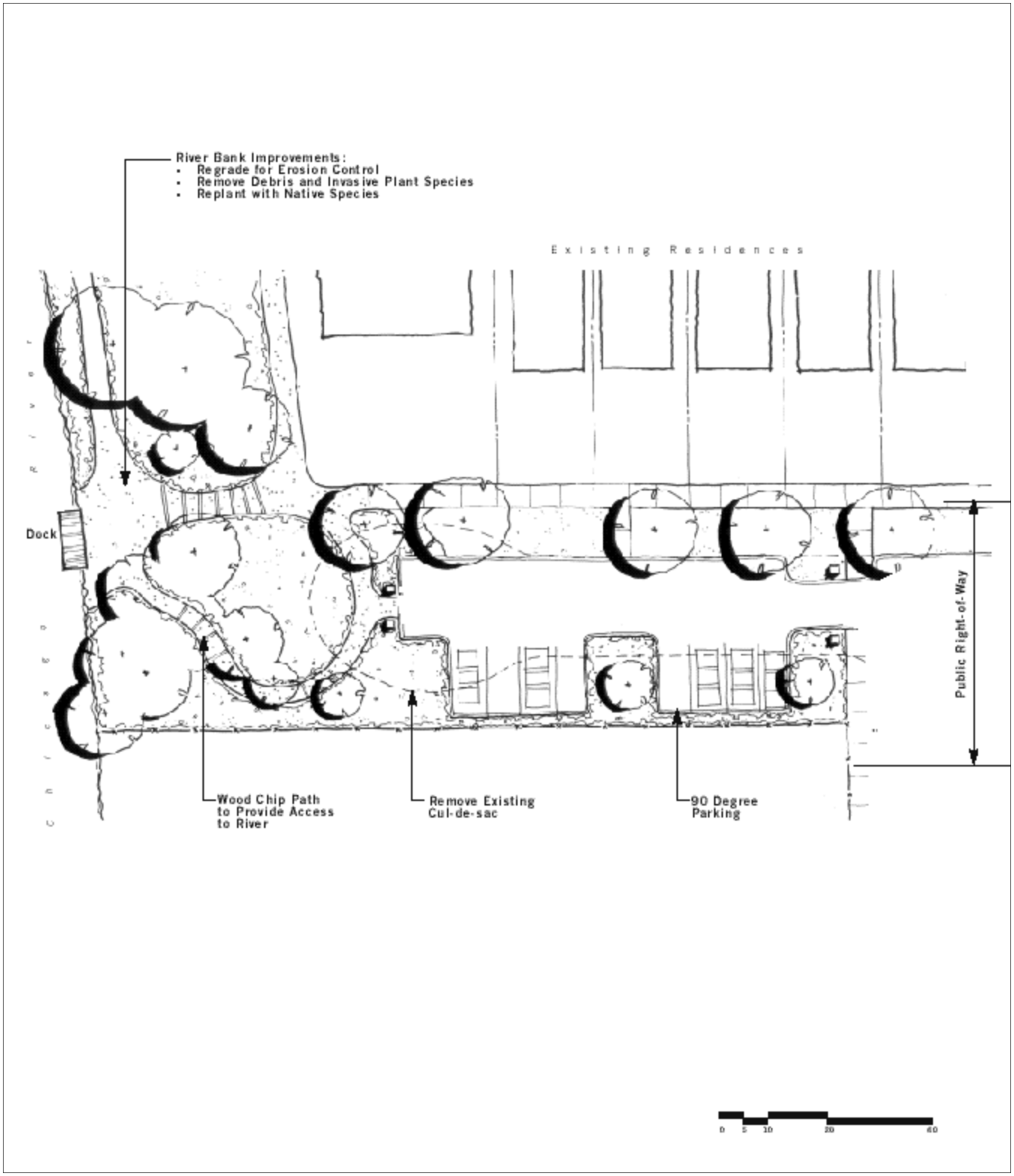
- Soften the approach to the site by replacing the cul-de-sac with landscaped open space.
- Build a gradually sloping ramp from the parking area to the water's edge.
- Improve the existing floating dock.

Habitat & Landscaping:

- Regrade as necessary to control erosion.
- Remove debris and invasive plant species.
- Replant with native species.
- Screen parking area with street trees.

Recreation:

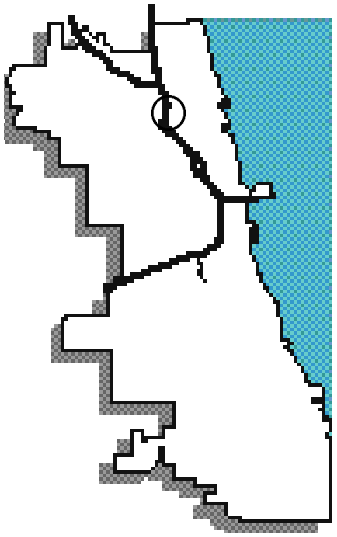
- Provide opportunities for bank fishing, wildlife viewing and river access.


River Bank Improvements:
• Regrade for Erosion Control
• Remove Debris and Invasive Plant Species
• Replant with Native Species
Existing Residences
Dock
Public Right-of-Way
Wood Chip Path to Provide Access to River
Remove Existing Cul-de-sac
90 Degree Parking
0 5 10 20 40

Middle North Branch: Neighborhood River Edge Improvements

Horner Park

Horner Park



At 58 acres, Horner Park is the largest in the Chicago Park District's North Region. The park stretches from Montrose Avenue on the north to Irving Park Road on the south, with the Chicago River forming its eastern boundary. Although the park is extensively used, public access to the river currently is cut off by a cyclone fence.

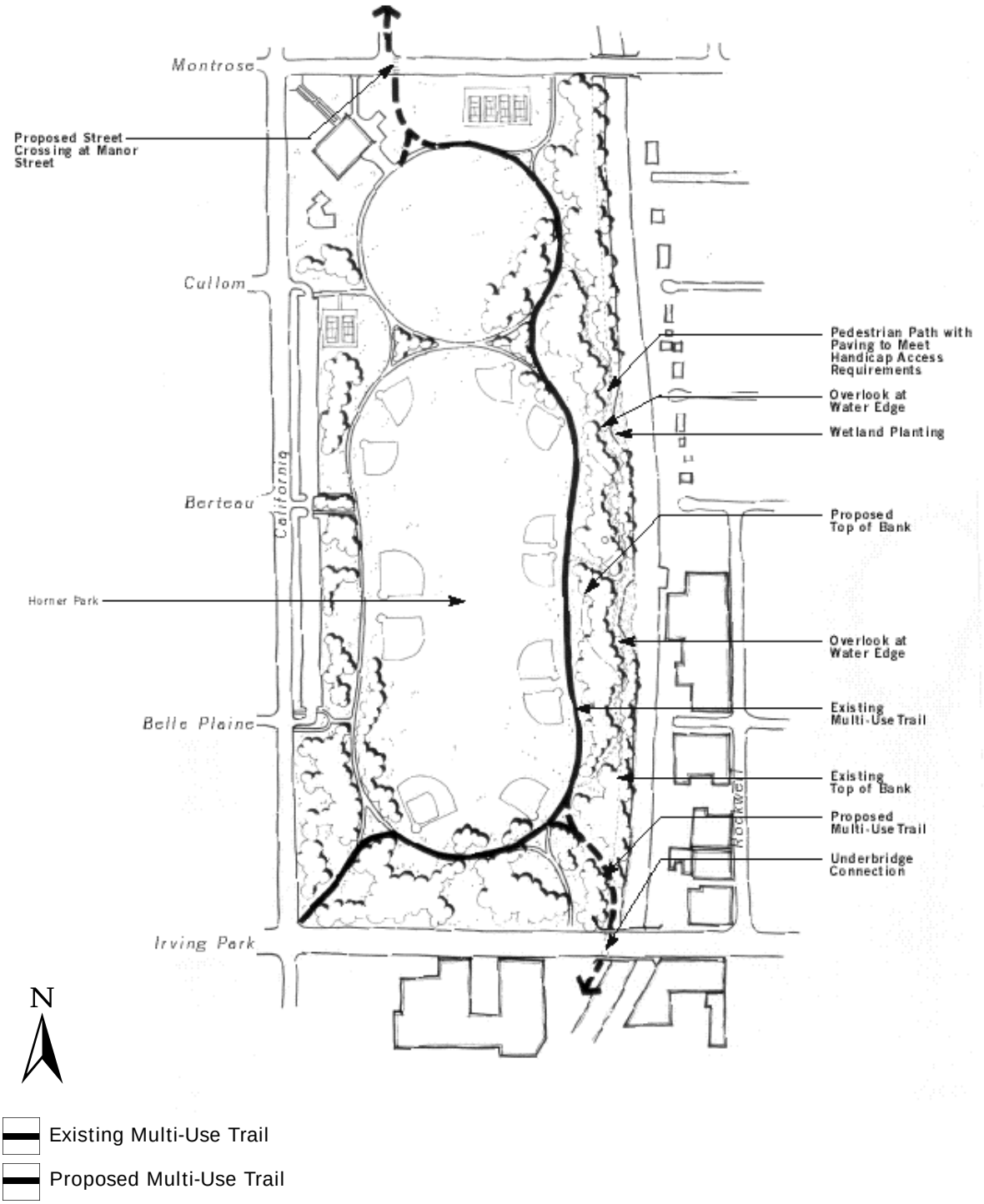
Proposed Improvements

Paths:
- Create a new riveredge path to connect to the park's existing multi-use trail.

River Access:
- Remove the existing cyclone fence.
- Regrade the riverbank to a more gradual slope.
- Provide riveredge seating.

Habitat & Landscaping :
- Plant shrubs, groundcover, and perennial plants on regraded slope to control erosion.
- Replant banks with native species.
- Create new wetlands with in-water plantings.

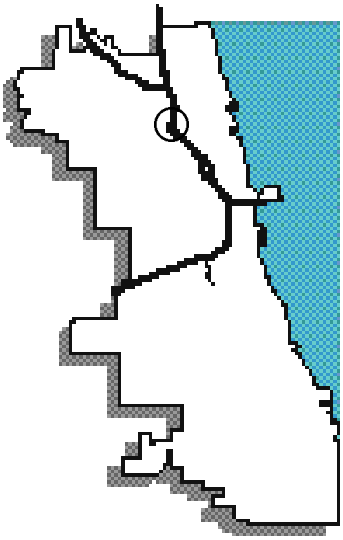
Recreation:
- Provide water-edge access for anglers.



Middle North Branch: Irving Park to Addison

Irving Park to Addison

Existing trail at McFetridge Sports Arena



This four-block stretch links Horner Park on the northwest with Clark Park on the southeast. The existing path through Horner Park can be connected under Irving Park Road to a new river-edge path east of Bush, Boake and Allen, and existing segments at California Park and the McFetridge Sports Arena. Just north of Addison, the Gordon Technical High School campus has been developed to the top of the bank; the path continues south on city sidewalks. A canoe launch with an adjacent drop-off area is planned just south of the McFetridge Sports Arena and is a potential location for a canoe rental facility and bait shop.

Proposed Improvements

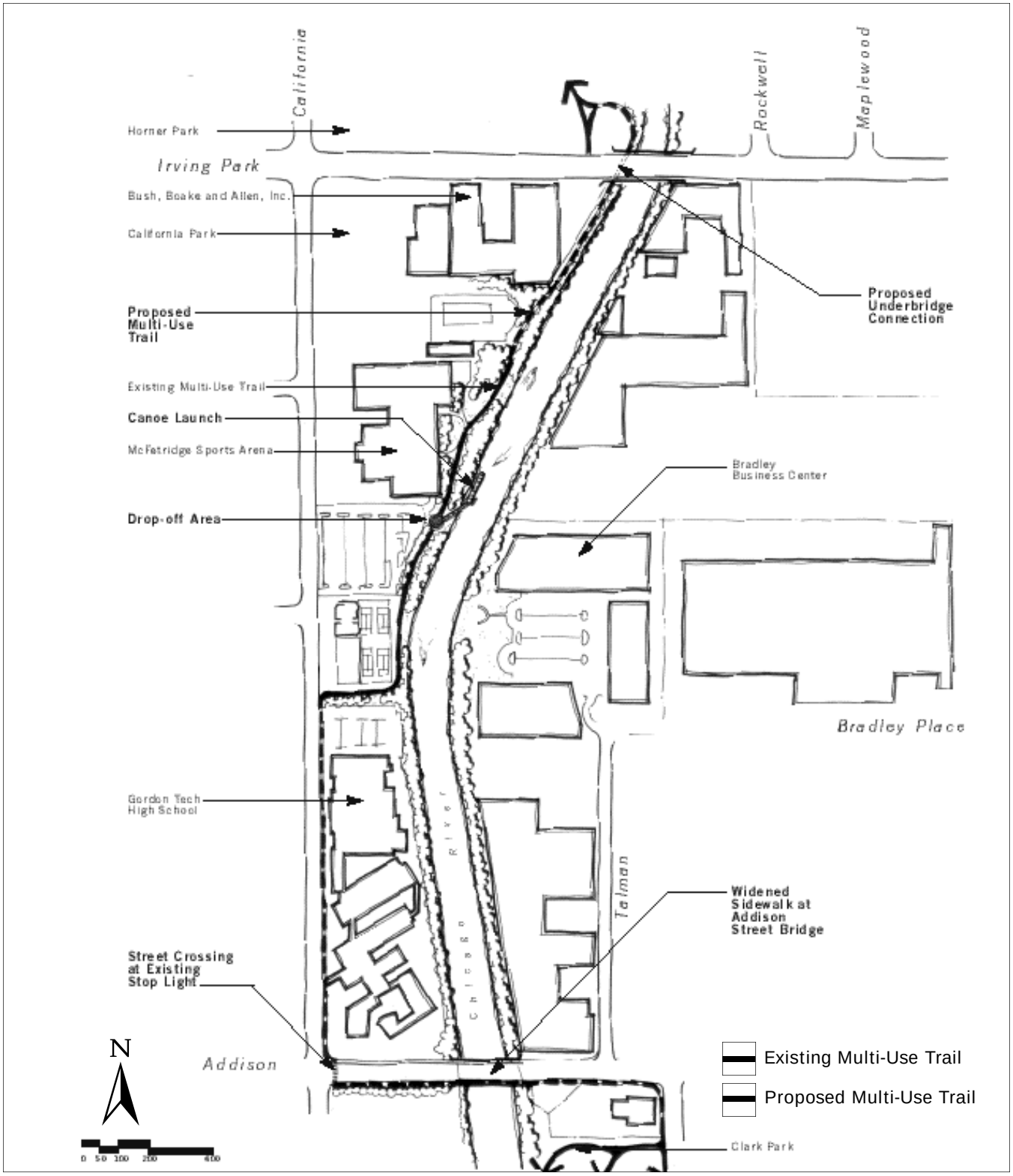
Paths:
- Create an underbridge connection on the west bank at Irving Park Road.
- Create a new path east of California Park behind the Bush, Boake and Allen facility.
- Improve the sidewalk on the east side of California Avenue adjacent to Gordon Technical High School.
- Improve the street crossing on the east side of California at Addison.
- Improve the sidewalk on the south side of Addison to the connection with Clark Park at Rockwell Street.

River Access:
- Create a canoe launch and drop-off at the McFetridge Sports Center parking lot.

Habitat & Landscaping:
- Landscape the bank behind the Bush, Boake and Allen facility.
- Regrade as necessary to control erosion.
- Remove debris and invasive plant species
- Replant with native species.

Recreation:
- Create an underbridge link to Horner Park.
- Provide an area for bank fishing at the canoe launch site.

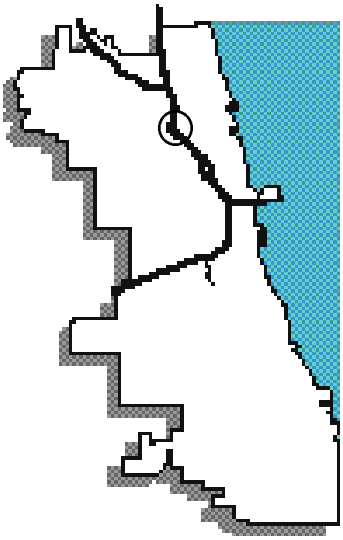
Economic Development:
- Explore the development of a canoe rental facility and bait shop behind the McFetridge Sports Center.



Middle North Branch: Irving Park to Addison

Addison to Belmont

Wildlife in Clark Park



Clark Park runs the length of the east bank of this site. On the west bank, a Commonwealth Edison facility and an industrial user impede public access to the river between Addison and Roscoe. South of Roscoe, the conversion of a former boat yard to the Burnside's Riverfront Communities residential development will include a public path at the water's edge. Additional proposed path improvements include upgraded and lighted sidewalks through Clark Park, a pedestrian bridge at Roscoe, and an underbridge connection at Belmont on the east bank. A canoe launch with a drop-off is planned for Clark Park, and a pocket park just north of the residential site. A prototype industrial street-end improvement for Roscoe Street is detailed in the preceding design. A wooded area at the southern end of Clark Park includes fragments of building foundations from the historic Riverview Amusement Park.

Proposed Improvements

Paths:

- Create a riveredge path through the residential development site on the west bank north of Belmont to Roscoe.
- Build a pedestrian bridge at Roscoe to connect to the path through Clark Park.
- Use the existing pedestrian ramp north from Belmont Avenue on the east bank.
- Incorporate widened sidewalk paths on the Belmont Avenue bridge in bridge improvement plans.

River Access:

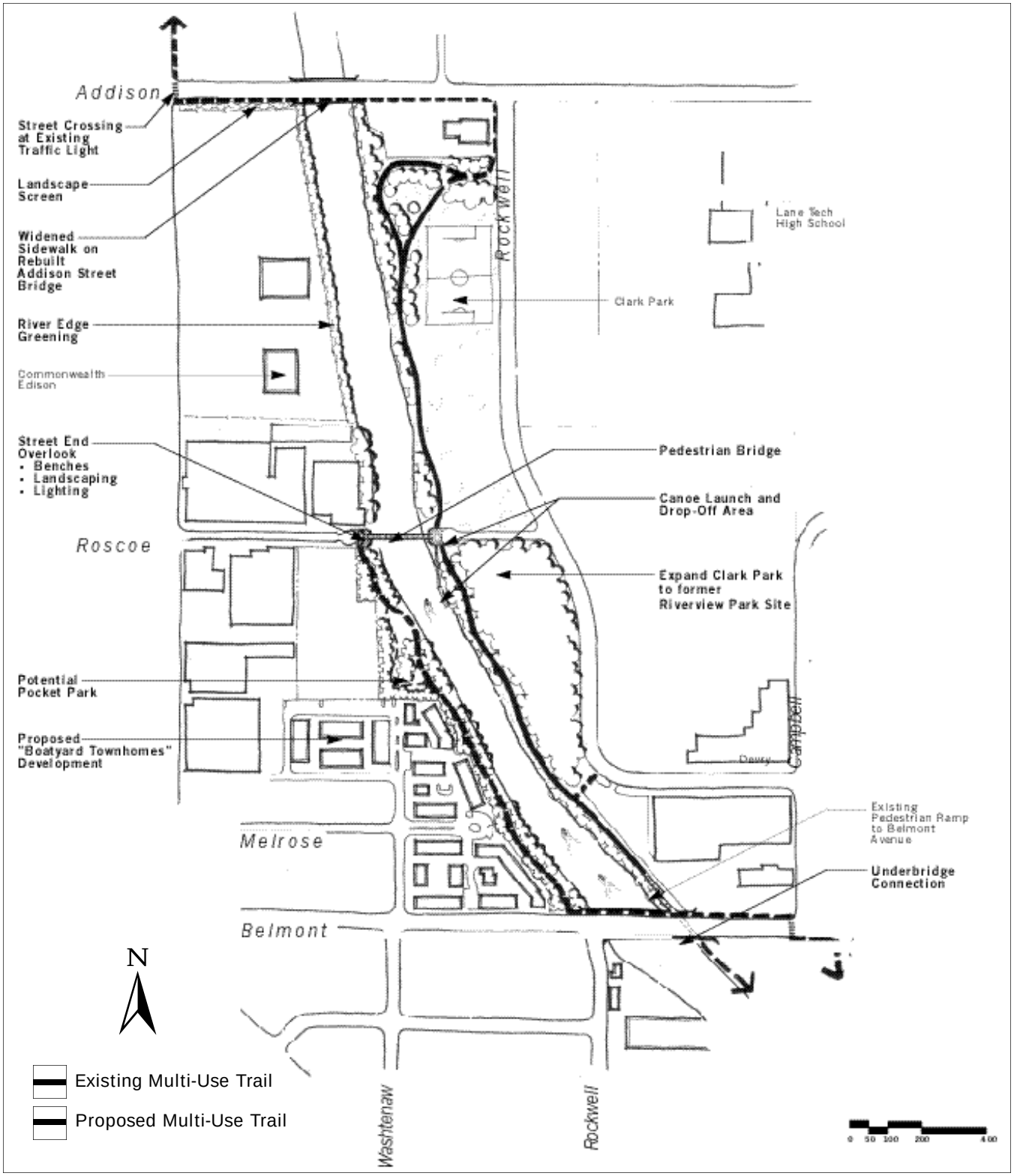
- Create a boat and canoe drop-off and launch in Clark Park.
- Improve the existing west bank Roscoe street end as shown in overlook designs.
- Develop a riverwalk with decorative railing at the new Boathouse Townhomes development.

Habitat & Landscaping:

- Landscape the bank at the Commonwealth Edison property south of Addison.
- Preserve and restore the woods at Clark Park.
- Landscape the river edge along industrial sites.
- Regrade as necessary to control erosion.
- Remove debris and invasive plant species.
- Replant with native species.

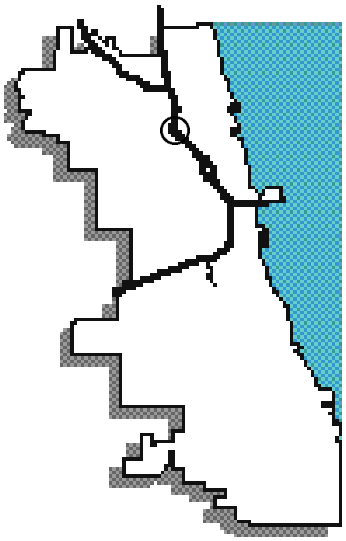
Recreation:

- Extend Clark Park south into the southern portion of the UPS site.
- Create a boat and canoe drop-off and launch in Clark Park.
- Install historic markers commemorating the former Riverview Amusement Park.



Middle North Branch: Addison to Belmont

Industrial Area Overlook



Like the residential street-end parks, the Roscoe Street dead-end on the west bank is proposed as open space for local users, in this case, workers from adjacent businesses. As a lunch spot or a quiet overlook onto the naturalized bank, the site would include benches, decorative railings, and lighting to enhance security. This basic design can be adapted for industrial street ends elsewhere on the river, including Goose Island and Pilsen. The Roscoe Street design can be built as it appears here, or with a pedestrian bridge connecting it to Clark Park, as shown in the next design.

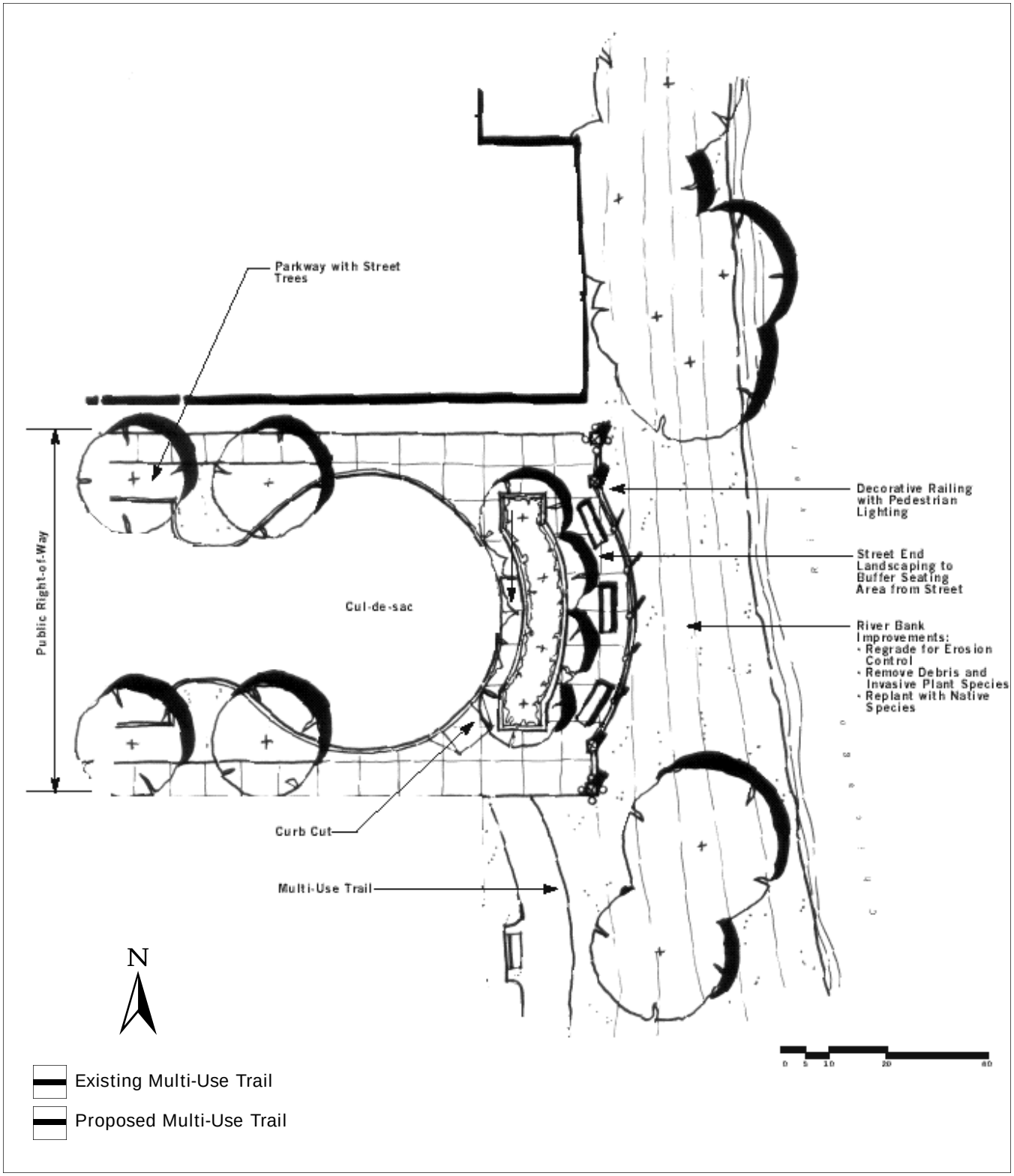
Proposed Improvements

Paths:
- Connect with the multi-use path through the residential site to the south.
- Connect the overlook with the existing sidewalk system.

River Access:
- Build an overlook with seating at the top of the bank and visual access to the river.
- Increase the sense of security with adequate lighting.

Habitat & Landscaping:
- Substitute landscaping for usual hard barriers.
- Stabilize the bank with vegetation or, where necessary, concrete structures.

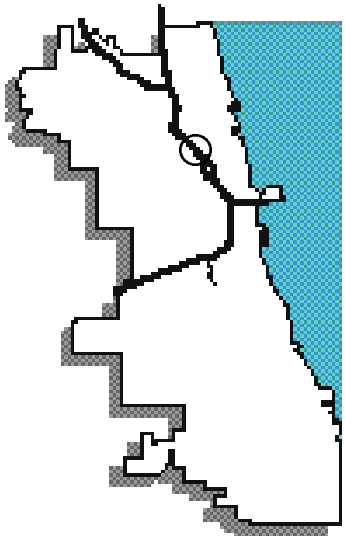
Recreation:
- Provide a recreational amenity for adjacent businesses.
- Separate industrial traffic from recreational visitors with a landscaped barrier.
- Link to Clark Park with a new pedestrian bridge.



Middle North Branch: Industrial Area Overlook

Lathrop Riverwalk

Existing site of Proposed Lathrop Promenade



The residents of this Chicago Housing Authority development have undertaken a multi-year plan to improve and expand the open space in their community. They envision a major recreational destination point, with seating areas, a river edge nature trail, a canoe launch and a new wetlands development. The project has received funding from the federal Urban Resources Partnership, the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation, and the Field Foundation.

Proposed Improvements

Paths:

- Widen the sidewalk on Leavitt Street north of Diversey Parkway to connect to the on-street system at Oakdale Street.
- Create a wood-chip nature trail along the river's edge from the neighborhood open space at the north end of Lathrop Homes west of Leavitt Street to Diversey Parkway.
- Build an underbridge connection at Diversey Parkway on the east bank.
- Widen the sidewalk on Leavitt Street south of Diversey Parkway.
- Reconfigure Leavitt Street south of Diversey Parkway to one-way northbound with an entrance from Hoyne Avenue.
- Build an underbridge connection at Damen Avenue on the east bank.

River Access:

- Build a floating boardwalk through the wetlands.
- Build a canoe launch at the north end of the wetlands boardwalk.
- Create a wood-chip nature trail along the river's edge from the neighborhood open space at the north end of Lathrop Homes west of Leavitt Street to Diversey Parkway.

Habitat & Landscaping:

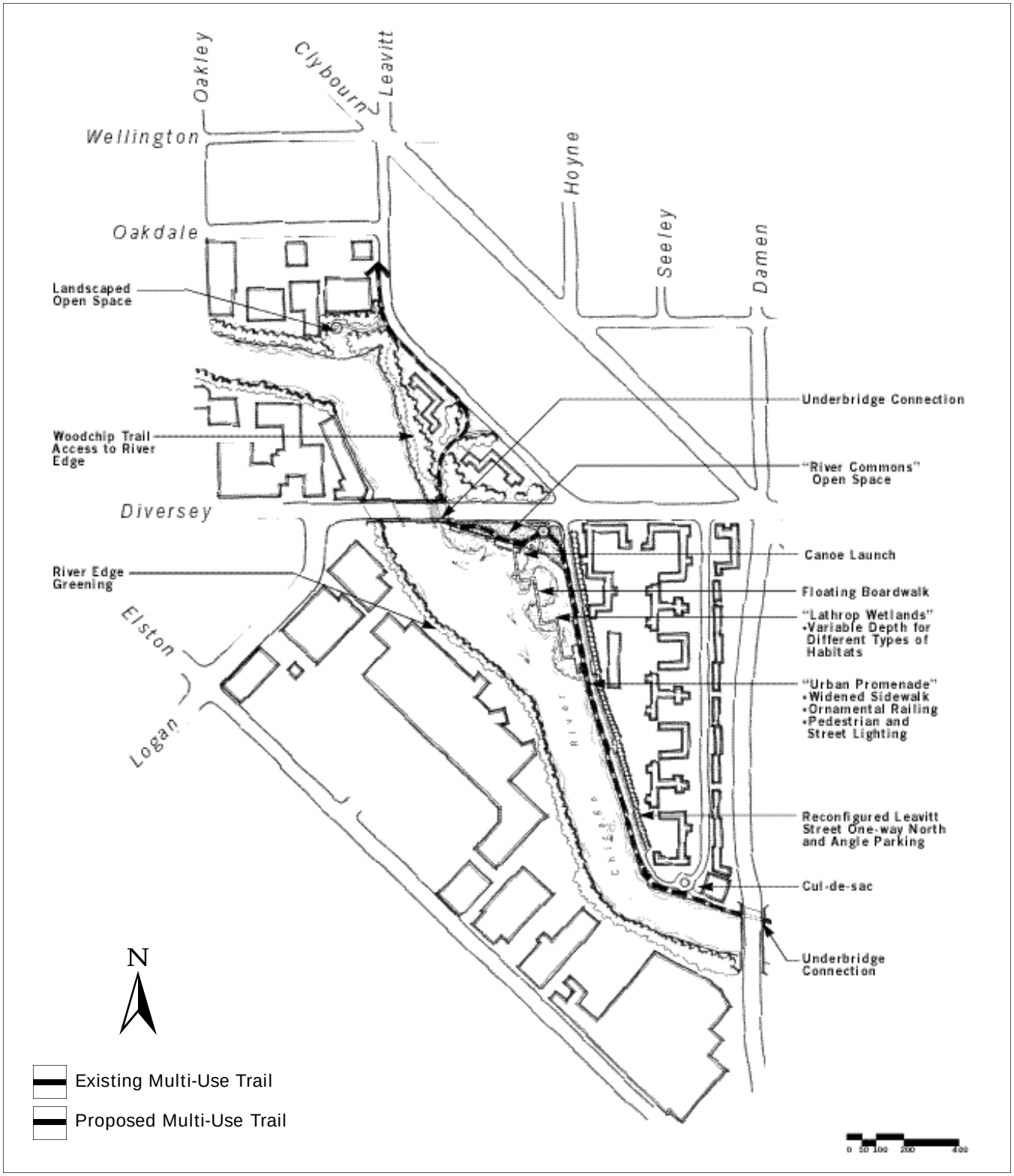
- Create wetlands in shallow areas on the east side of the Turning Basin south of Diversey Parkway.
- Create a wood-chip nature trail along the river's edge from Leavitt Street to Diversey Parkway.
- Regrade as necessary to control erosion.
- Remove debris and invasive plant species.
- Replant with native species.

Recreation:

- Create a landscaped neighborhood open space with seating area at the north end of the Lathrop Homes west of Leavitt.
- Create a boat and canoe launch south of Diversey Parkway on the east bank.

Economic Development:

- Explore food and other concessions that could be operated by community residents.



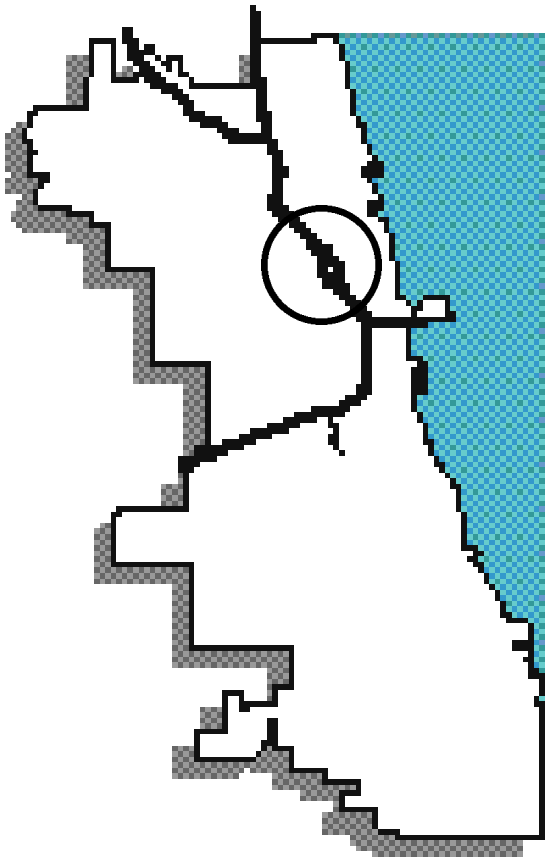
Middle North Branch: Lathrop Riverwalk

Reach Five

Lower North Branch: Damen Avenue to Chicago Avenue

GOALS:
- Increase public access to the river.
- Create additional recreational areas.
- Create a greenway through business areas and residential neighborhoods.
- Complete the greenway on setbacks on privately owned land.

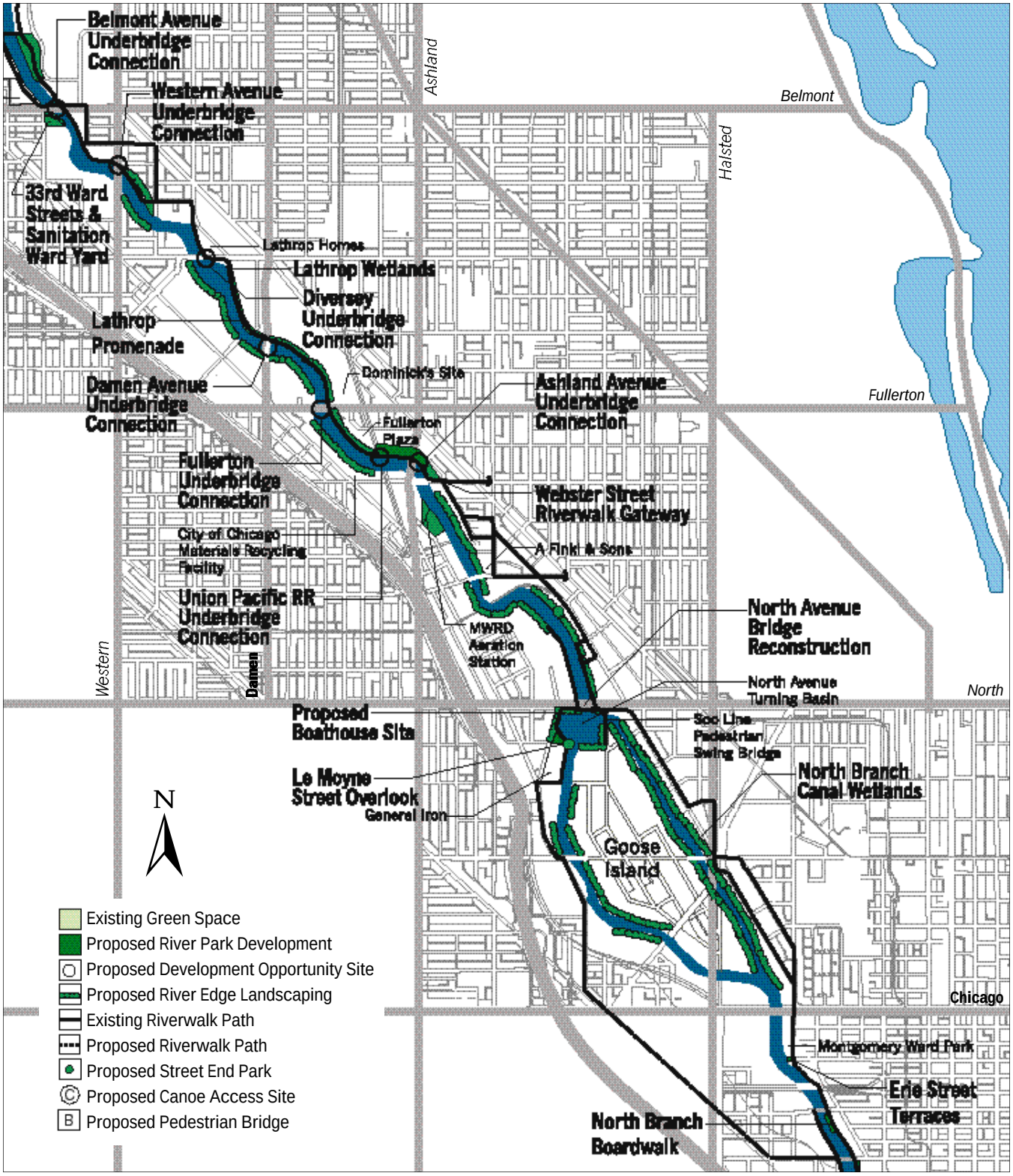
CHARACTERISTICS :
- This reach is predominantly zoned for manufacturing and related uses, although commercial uses have made inroads at the river's edge.
- Due to the heavy industrial nature of this section, there are no pedestrian paths adjacent to the waterway.
- At a depth of ten feet, the manmade North Branch Canal is navigable by standard nine-foot barges.
- The river between the main branch and the North Avenue Turning Basin is designated as a Federal Navigable Waterway.
- Goose Island is a 146-acre island formed by the North Branch Canal and the North Branch of the Chicago River.
- Land values are increasing as up-scale housing and commercial development occur.



CONSTRAINTS :
- Barge traffic and industrial uses limit the potential for water-edge development and cantilevered dock construction.
- Businesses frequently have built to the river's edge.
- Pedestrian and automobile access to the river is poor.
- Steep banks are hazardous and limit access.
- Soil and groundwater tend to be heavily contaminated.
- High land values impede acquisition for public purposes.

OPPORTUNITIES :
- River access can be included in project plans as new development occurs.
- Private developers are interested in building boating facilities.

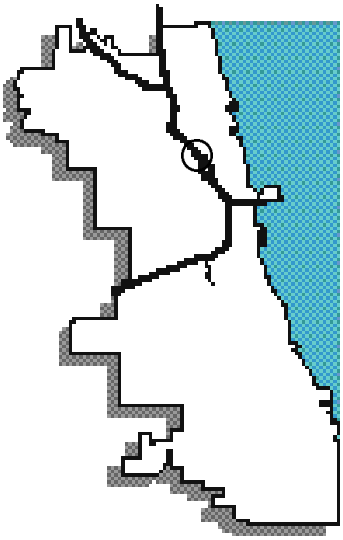
OPPORTUNITY SITES:
- DAMEN TO FULLERTON
- FULLERTON PLAZA
- UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD BRIDGE TO WEBSTER
- NORTH AVENUE TURNING BASIN



Reach Five: Lower North Branch - Damen Avenue to Chicago Avenue

Damen to Fullerton

Riverwalk behind Riverpoint Shopping Center



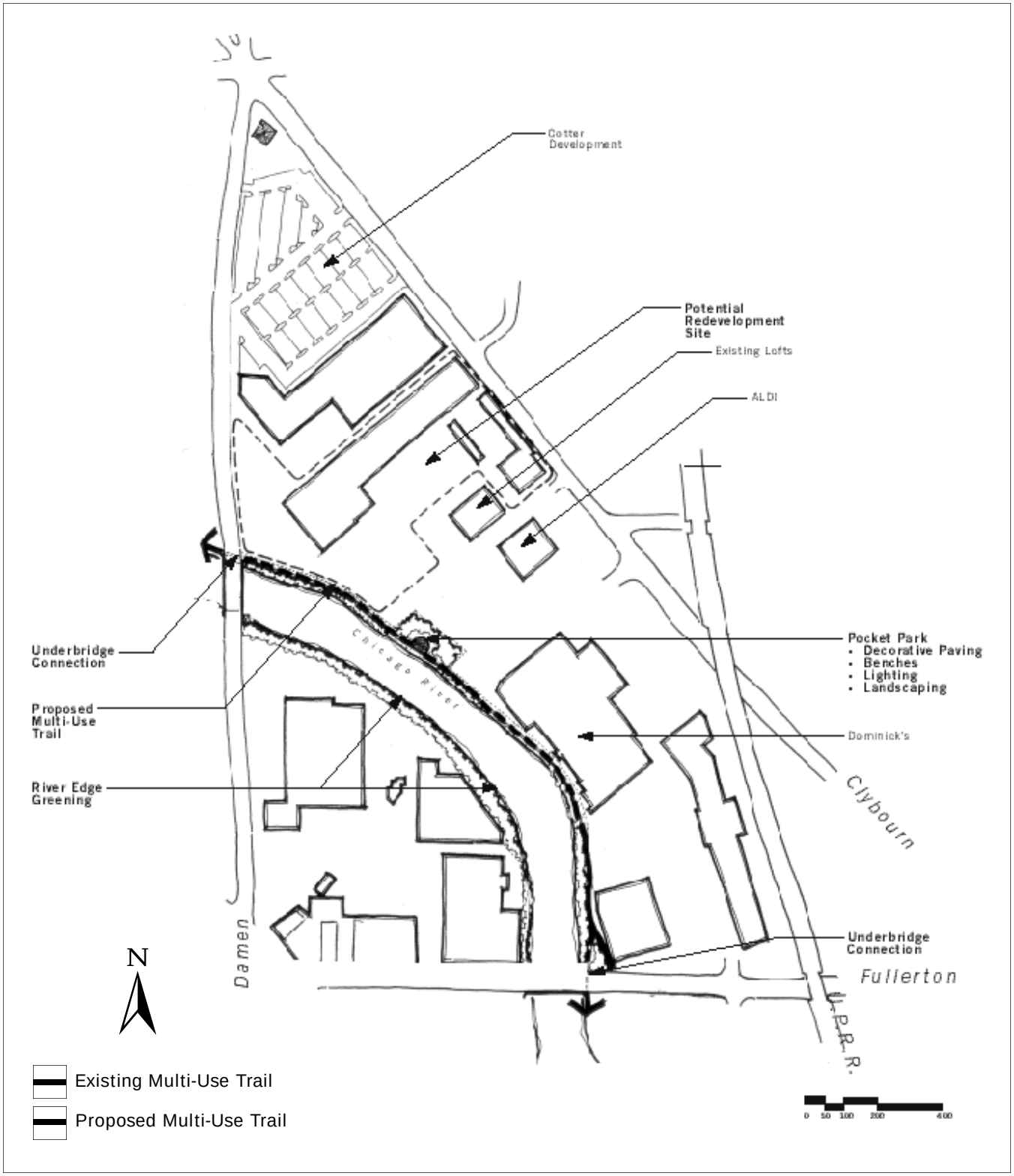
This 16.25-acre potential redevelopment site, the former home of Cotter and Company, will leave an ample setback for a water-edge path. Vertical bulkheads limit landscaping to a portion of sloped bank behind the Marshall's store just north of Fullerton.

Proposed Improvements

Paths:
- Link to the Lathrop Homes to the north with an underbridge connection at Damen Avenue.
- Connect to the south with the proposed multi-use path behind the Dominick's Food Store at 2550 N. Clybourn Avenue.
- Link with the existing path to the south behind the Marshall's store to Fullerton Avenue.
- Link to the Fullerton Plaza site south of Fullerton with an underbridge connection at Fullerton.

Habitat & Landscaping:
- Green the top of the bank with low-lying landscape plants.
- Provide a landscaped buffer between the multi-use trail and industrial/commercial uses.

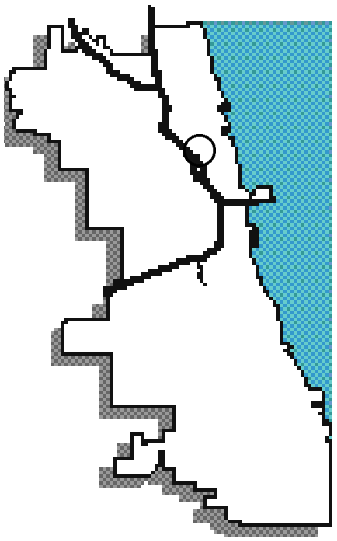
Recreation:
- Create a pocket park at the former Cotter site with seating, river views, landscaping and lighting.



Lower North Branch: Damen to Fullerton

Fullerton Plaza

Fullerton Plaza riveredge seating area



This site is an excellent example of what can be accomplished when the public and private sectors work together. This shopping center was built on the former site of an asphalt plant. Its developer worked closely with the city's Department of Planning and Development to ensure a design that would make the most of its river location. With over 2,000 linear feet of river frontage, this design features a 30-foot setback from the top of the bank, with a multi-use path, landscaping and seating areas. The site will serve as an important link in the riveredge path system as well as a recreational amenity for shopping center visitors and employees.

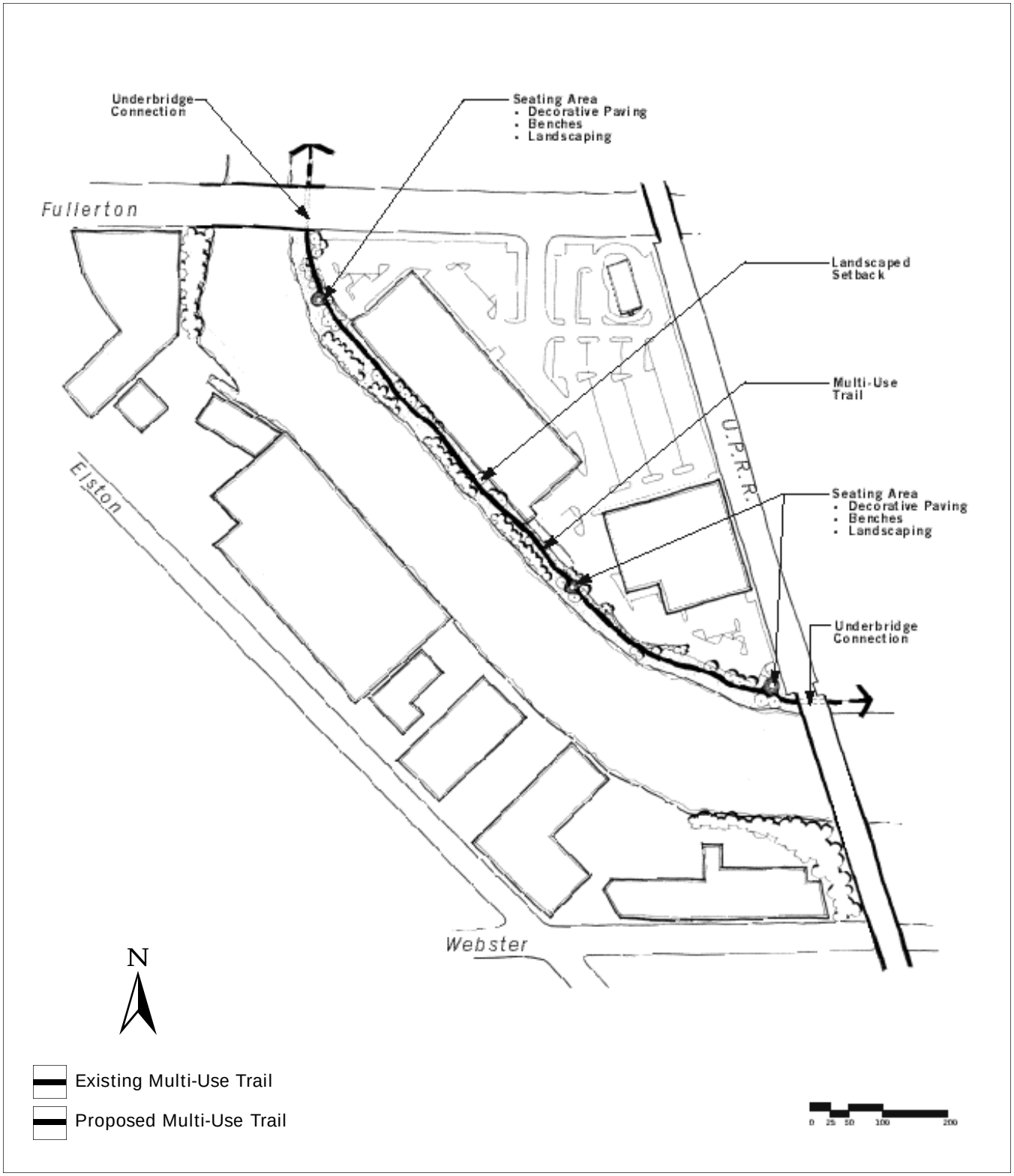
Proposed Improvements

Paths:
- Link to the north with an underbridge connection at Fullerton.
- Build a continuous path at river's edge between Fullerton and the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) tracks.
- Link to the south with an underbridge connection at the UPRR tracks.

River Access:
- Create three paved seating areas with benches.
- Provide parking in the adjacent shopping center lot.
- Enhance security with building-mounted lighting.

Habitat & Landscaping:
- Screen the path from the parking lot with ornamental and shade trees.
- Regrade as necessary to control erosion.
- Remove debris and invasive plant species.
- Replant with native species.

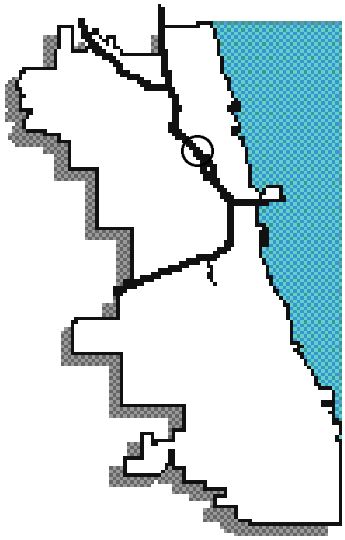
Recreation:
- Build a multi-use path for strollers, runners and cyclists.



Lower North Branch: Fullerton Plaza

Union Pacific Railroad Bridge to Webster

Materials Recycling Facility along the river



This plan envisions a band of green space through an area of mixed industrial and commercial development. It calls for continuing the multi-use path south from the Fullerton Plaza site to Webster Avenue. A cantilevered walkway along the City of Chicago Materials Recycling Facility west of Ashland Avenue provides a key link. As the site on the east bank north of Webster Avenue is redeveloped, the plan could be expanded to include a "Riverwalk Gateway" at Webster Avenue and Dominick Street to mark the transition between the on-street and river edge paths.

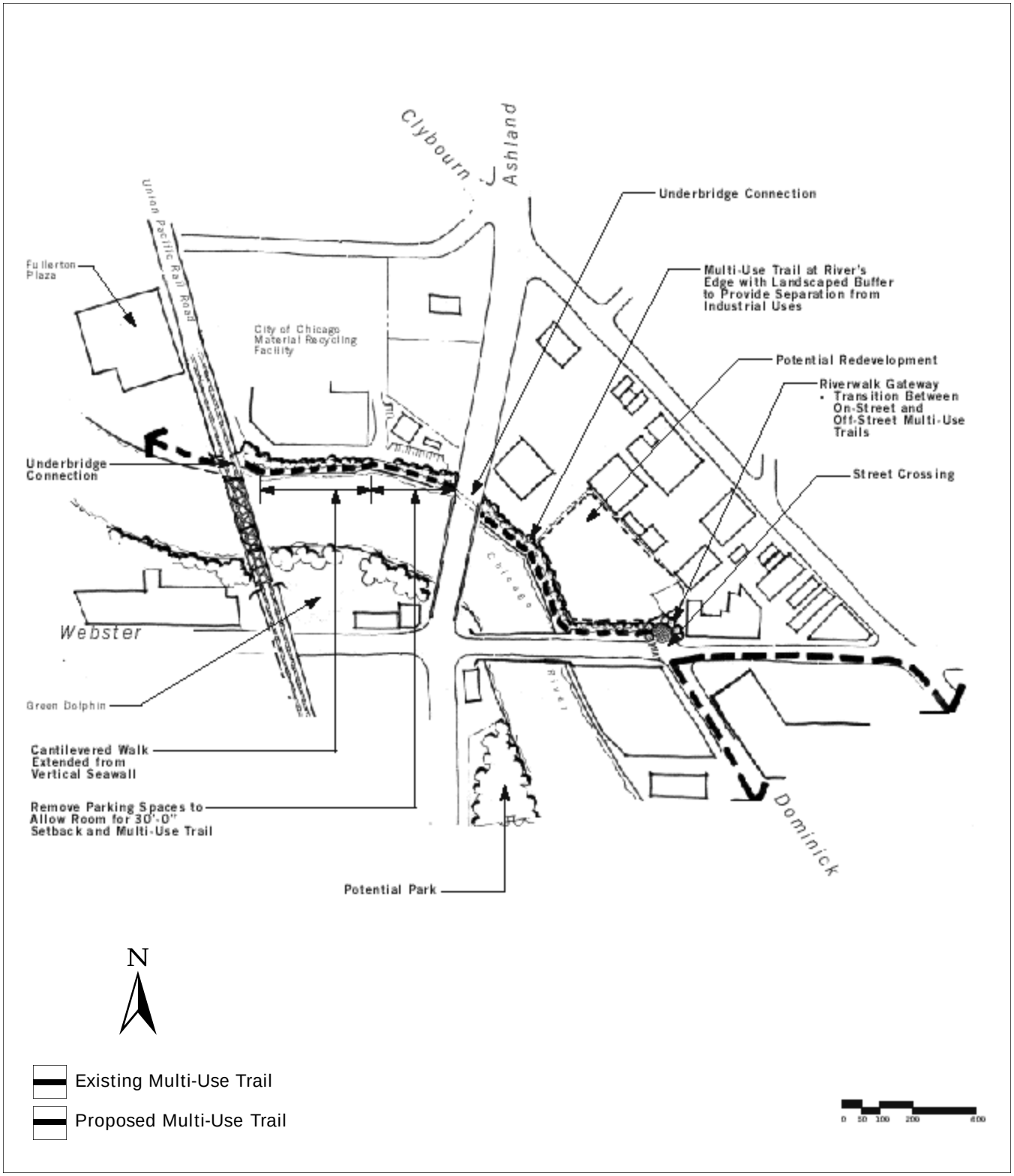
Proposed Improvements

Paths:
- Link Fullerton Plaza to the north with a connection under the Union Pacific Railroad bridge.
- Build a cantilevered walkway along the seawall fronting the City of Chicago Materials Recycling Facility (MRF).
- Create a connection under the Ashland Avenue bridge.
- Provide a 30-foot setback from the top of the east bank between Ashland and Webster.

River Access:
- Create a Riverwalk Gateway plaza at Webster and Dominick.

Habitat & Landscaping:
- Screen the path with a landscaped buffer at the Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) and the adjacent tire recycling facility.

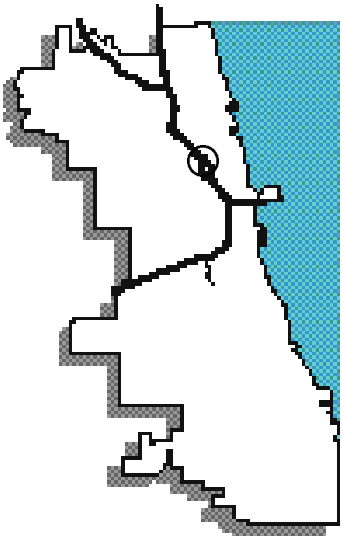
Recreation:
- When the tire recycling facility north of Webster Avenue is redeveloped, expand the existing setback to 30 feet.
- Provide a transition between the on-street and riveredge paths with a Riverwalk Gateway at Webster Avenue.



Lower North Branch: Union Pacific Railroad to Webster

North Avenue Turning Basin

The Turning Basin and the North Avenue Bridge



The North Avenue Turning Basin is at the heart of a thriving manufacturing district. The North Branch Canal connects with the site at the northern tip of Goose Island. Expanding residential development to the east and west have increased the demand for recreational access to the site. This design seeks to balance recreational needs with those of the adjacent manufacturers, many of whom use river barges to transport their raw materials. Improvements would include landscaped edges on all sides of the basin and bridge improvements. In addition, a planning process has been undertaken to identify other opportunities for creating paths, river access, and landscape improvements, while fostering economic development initiatives in the vicinity surrounding the North Avenue Turning Basin

Proposed Improvements

Paths:

- Create an "urban promenade" along the north and west banks of the Turning Basin.
- Close Magnolia Street south of North Avenue to provide for greater riverfront enhancements and support larger development opportunities.
- Widen the sidewalks on the reconstructed North Avenue bridge.

River Access:

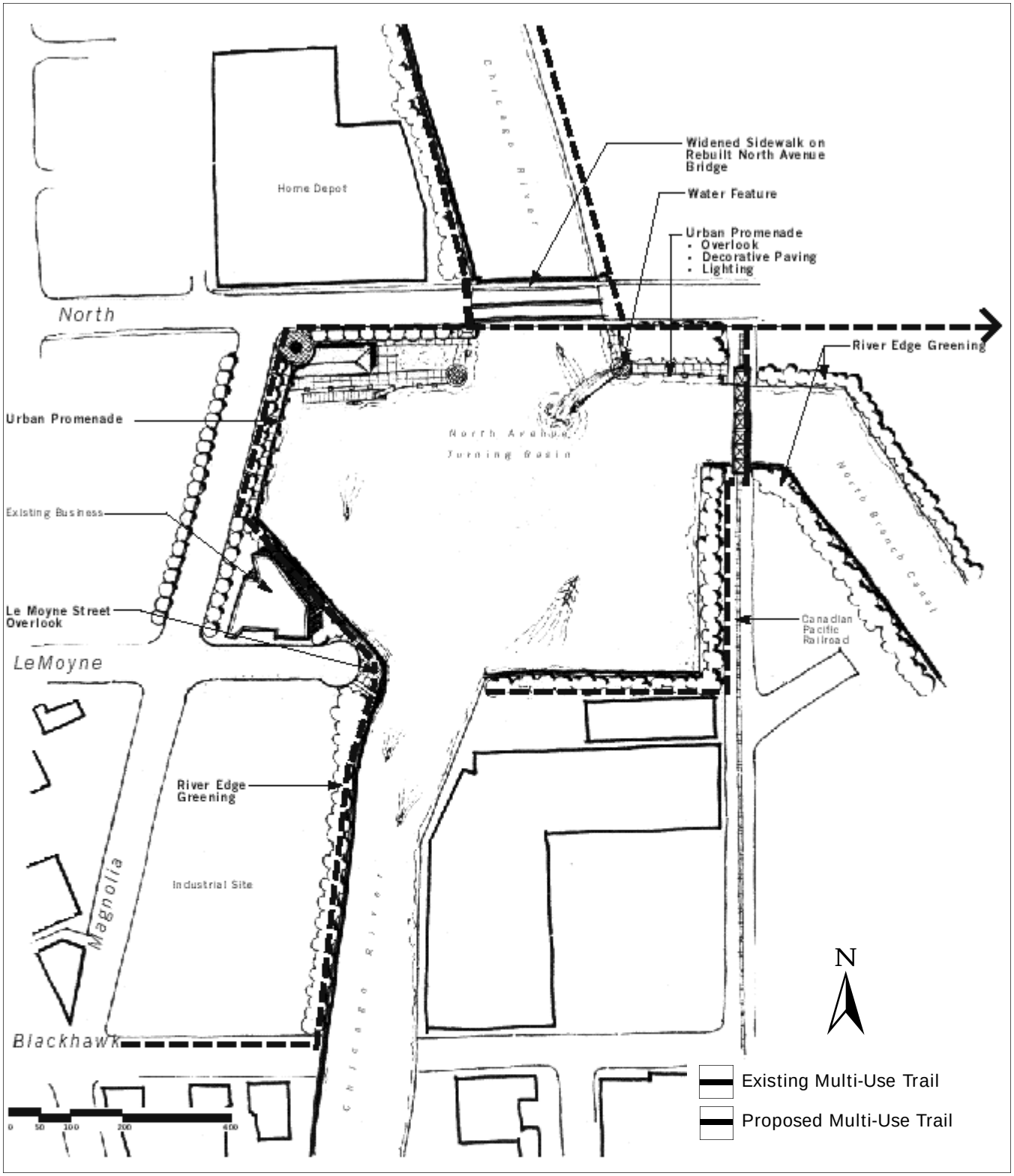
- Install ornamental railings and lighting to define the Basin.
- Build overlooks along the south side of North Avenue adjacent to the Turning Basin.
- Connect the promenade to the northwest bank of the Turning Basin with a stair tower.

Habitat & Landscaping:

- Landscape the river edge north of Blackhawk Street.
- Plant shade and ornamental trees around the edge of the Turning Basin.

Recreation:

- Develop boat storage, marina, launch and canoe facilities in the North Avenue Turning Basin



Middle North Branch: Damen to Fullerton

Reach Six

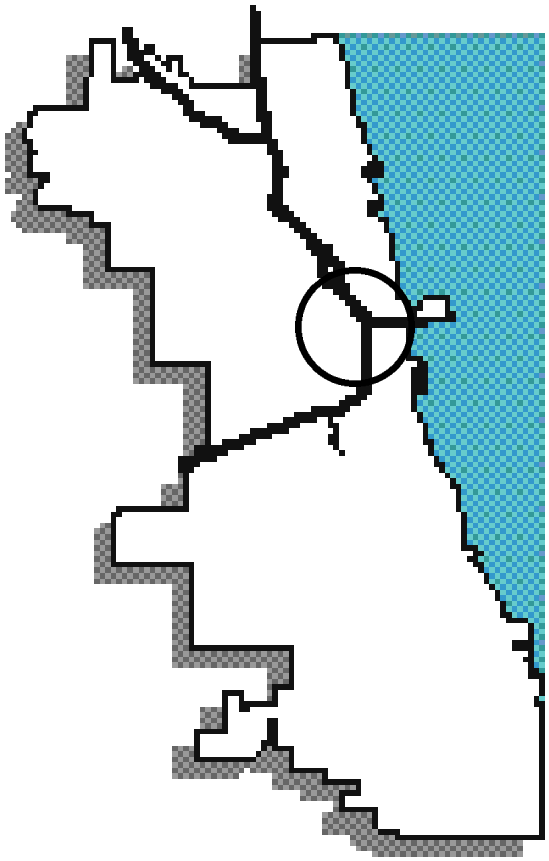
Downtown Main Branch: Chicago Avenue to Congress Parkway

GOALS:
- Increase public access to the river.
- Create additional recreational areas.
- Create greenway through business areas and residential neighborhoods.
- Work with the private sector to complete streamway on setbacks.

CHARACTERISTICS :
- The river's main branch is a focal point for high-rise commercial office, hotel and residential development.
- The lock at the mouth of the river provides access to Lake Michigan.
- The reach features many cultural and historic sites.
- Navy Pier provides a waterfront park and festival space.
- A new half mile, multi-use path connects the lakefront bike path to Michigan Avenue.
- A nine-hole golf course is located just south of South Bank park.
- River Esplanade Park runs along the north bank from Lake Shore Drive to Columbus Drive and includes the MWRD Centennial Fountain.
- Excursion boat companies offer tours of the river and lake.
- Twenty different gamefish species can be caught here.

CONSTRAINTS :
- The river's edge is mostly a vertical wall of concrete and steel sheet piling.
- Most of the river-edge parcels are privately held.
- Businesses frequently have built to the river's edge.
- High land values impede acquisition for public purposes.

OPPORTUNITIES :
- The Wacker Drive Reconstruction Project will create new river edge parks and plazas on the south and east banks between Cityfront Center and Congress Parkway.
- The South Branch Riverwalk will link downtown to Chinatown Park.
- Public plazas and riverwalks are integrated into the designs for many developments.
- North Pier and Wolf Point are used as access points for paddle boats.
- South Bank Park at Illinois Center provides a dock-level walkway and landscaping, a street-level walkway, and good bank fishing.

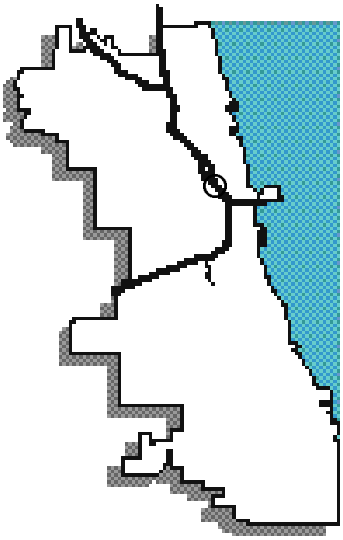


OPPORTUNITY SITES:
- ERIE STREET TERRACES
- NORTH BRANCH BOARDWALK
- RUSH STREET IMPROVEMENTS
- WACKER DRIVE RECONSTRUCTION
- RIVERWALK GATEWAY
- SOUTH WACKER PARK

Reach Six: Downtown Main Branch - Chicago Avenue to Congress Parkway

Erie Street Terraces

Site conditions



This site, at the foot of Erie and Larabee streets, is planned as upper and lower terraces connected by a staircase. A cul-de-sac with paving and a fountain will define the entrance to the upper terrace and improve vehicular circulation.

Proposed Improvements

Paths:

- Connect at the water's edge to the riverwalk and the Montgomery Ward Park to the north.
- Connect to the on-street system at the upper terraces.

River Access:

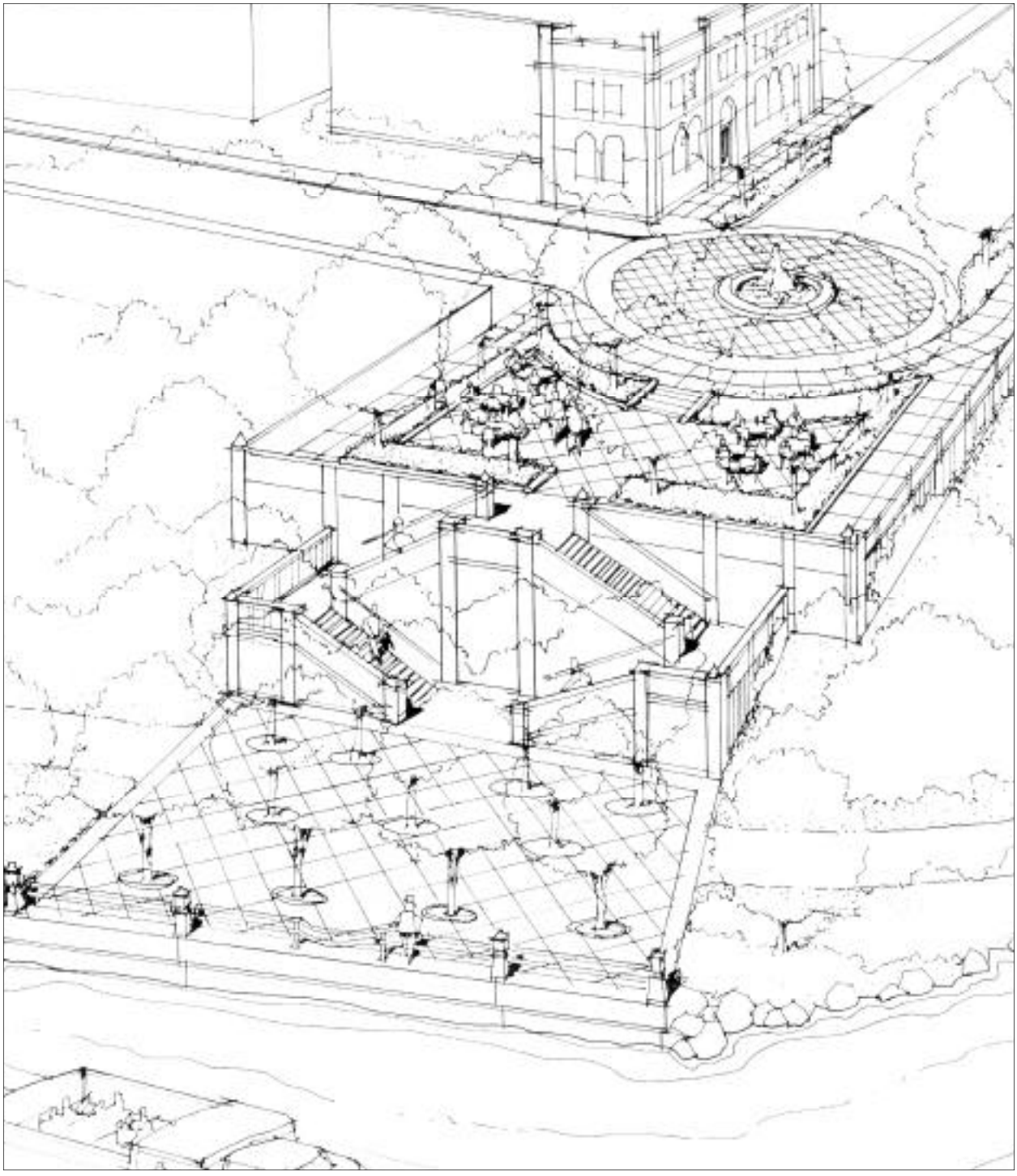
- Create a circular drop-off with special paving and a fountain on the upper terrace.
- Create a lighted and paved seating area on the upper and lower terraces.
- Connect the dock-level terrace to a riverwalk path to the south.

Habitat & Landscaping:

- Plant ornamental and shade trees on the upper and lower terraces.
- Landscape the natural bank to the north and south.

Recreation:

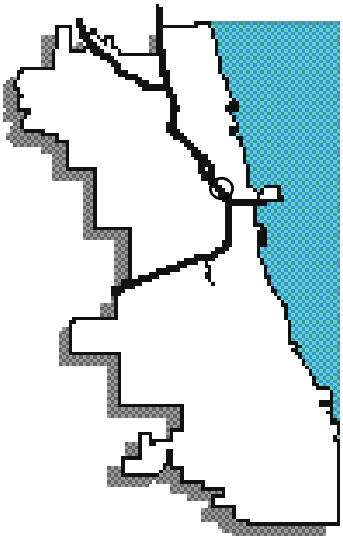
- Provide an area for bank fishing on the lower terrace.
- Link to the downtown riverwalk system.



Erie Street Terraces

North Branch Boardwalk

Site Conditions



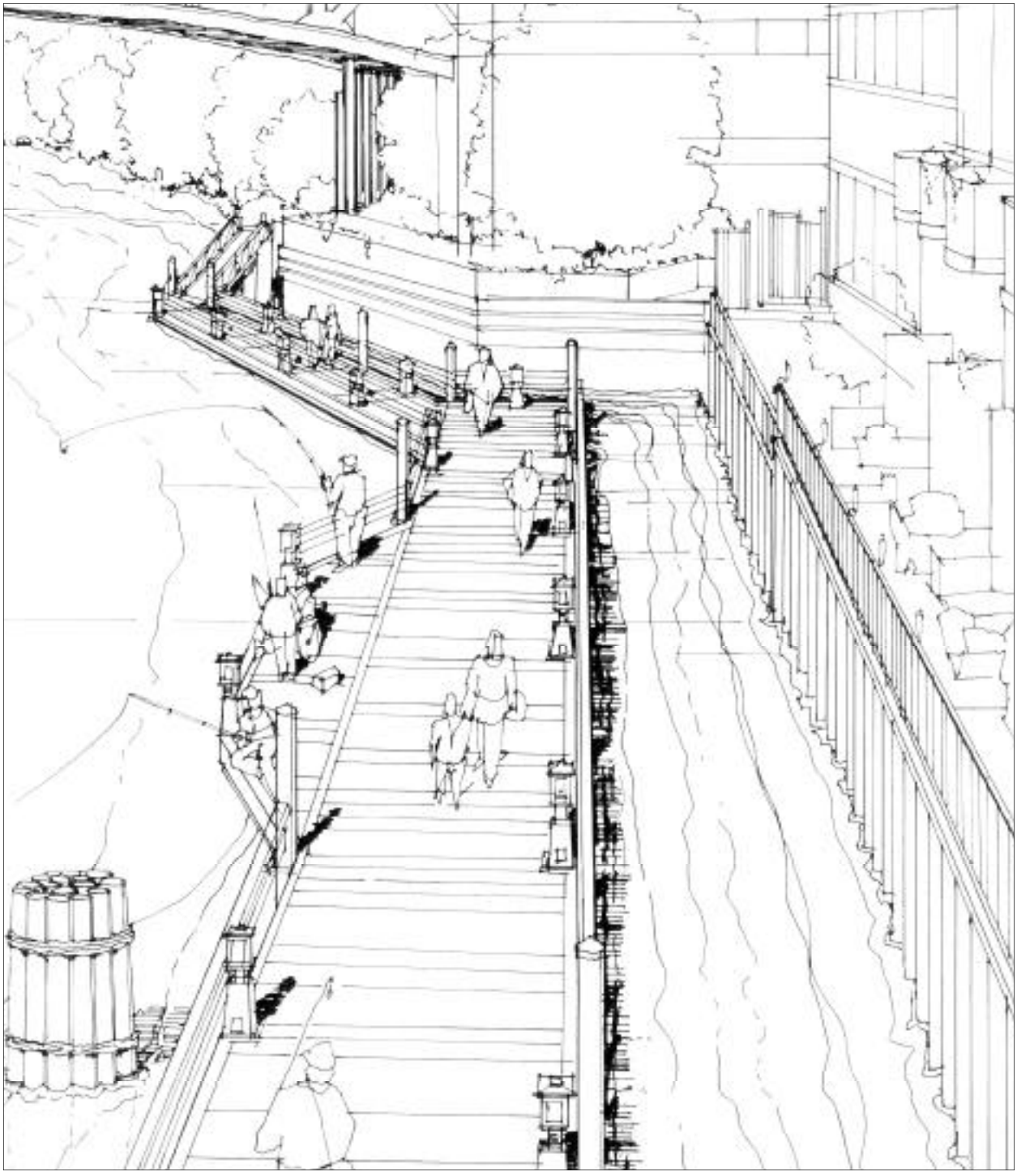
This floating walkway would stretch from the south side of Grand Avenue to the north side of Ontario Street providing a link in the riverwalk system through an area where development precludes a path on land. The structure would lie 12 to 14 feet from the existing bulkhead.

Proposed Improvements

Paths:
- Create underbridge connections below Ohio and Ontario streets to the Erie Street Terraces to the north.
- To the south, connect with the existing path fronting the East Bank Club.

River Access:
- Enhance security with railings and adequate lighting.

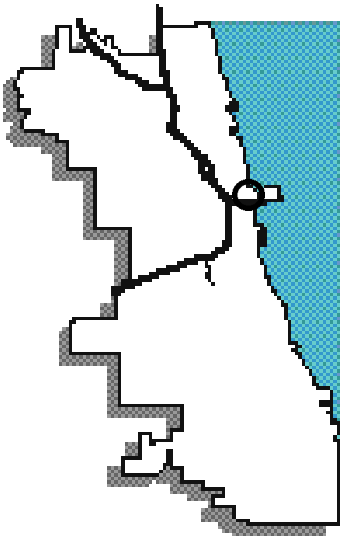
Recreation:
- Provide areas for fishing.



North Branch Boardwalk

Riverwalk Gateway

Existing connection under Lake Shore Drive

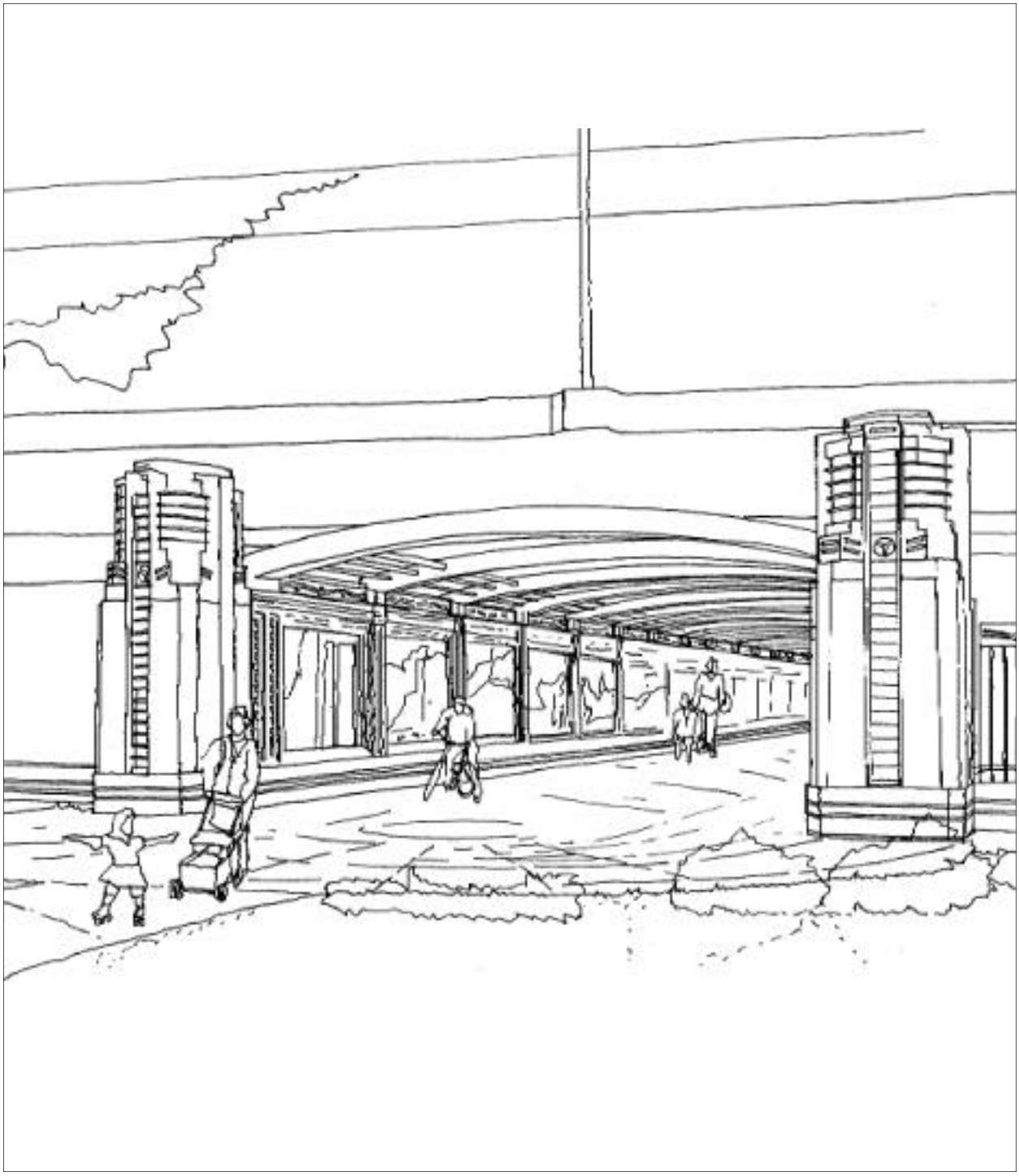


The Riverwalk Gateway is proposed as welcoming connection between lakefront attractions and the downtown riverwalk. It will be an important addition to the roster of improvements to the mouth of the river. Monroe Street Harbor and the Turning Basin will be reconfigured, the Coast Guard Station will be rehabilitated, and the new DuSable Park built, all within the next few years. Construction of the gateway will involve cladding of the existing Lake Shore Drive bridge structure.

Proposed Improvements

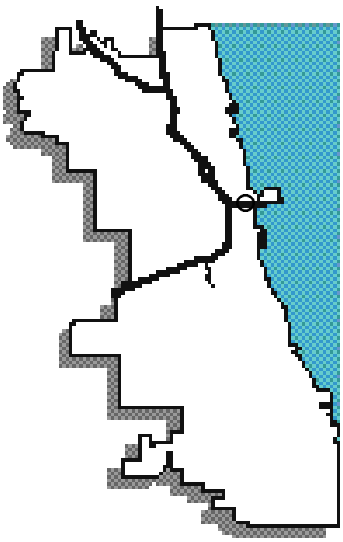
Recreation:

- Create a link between the Downtown Riverwalk and the lakefront bike path.



Riverwalk Gateway

Rush Street Park Improvements



Site conditions

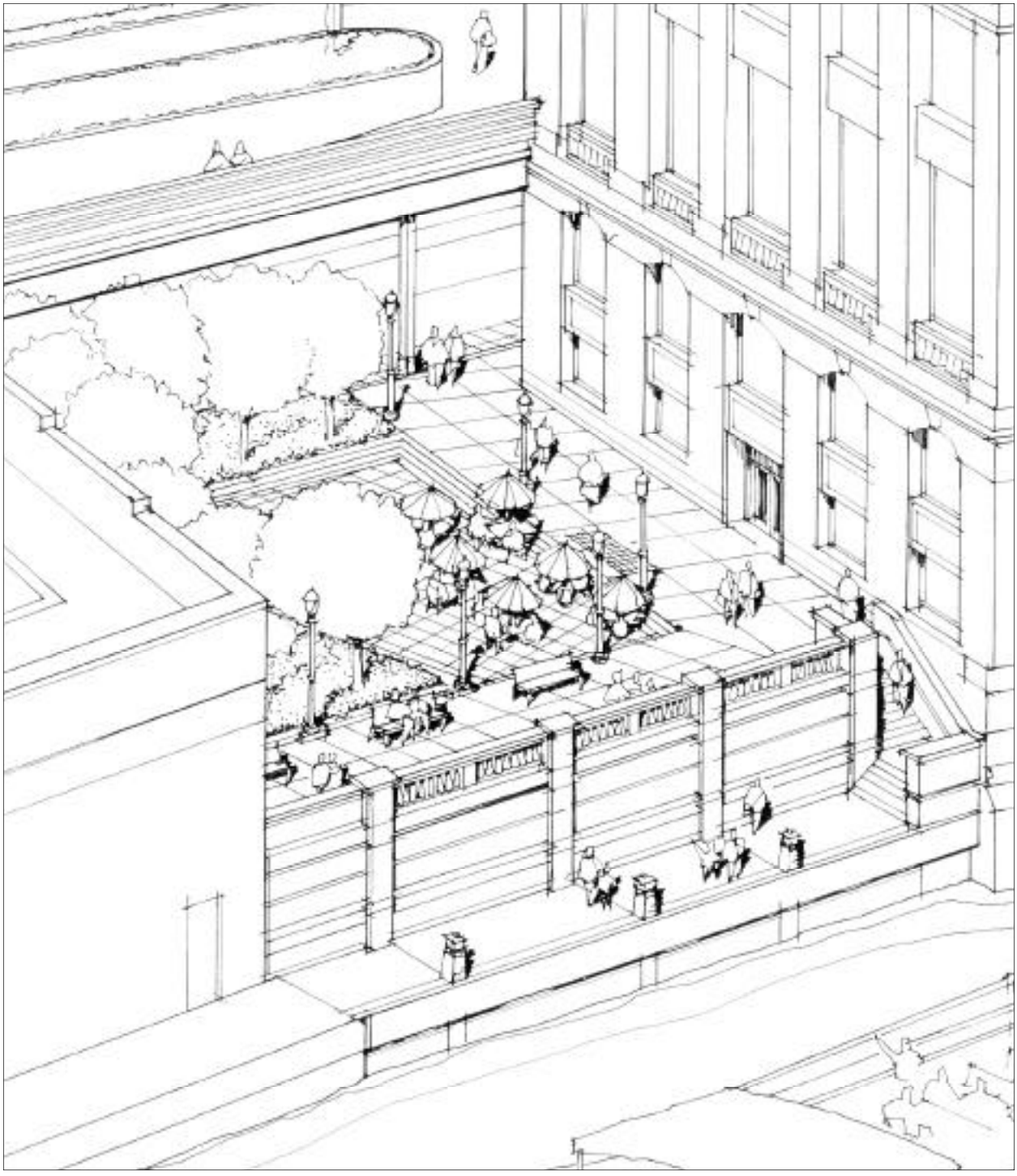
This site, within the Rush Street right-of-way, is likely to be affected when the adjacent Sun-Times building is redeveloped. The proposed plan calls for inexpensive, short-term improvements that can enhance the site's attractiveness to visitors from nearby office buildings. The Wendella Sightseeing Boats currently use the site as a part-time dock.

Proposed Improvements

River Access:
- Improve mooring facilities for excursion boats.
- Create a paved, lighted seating area.

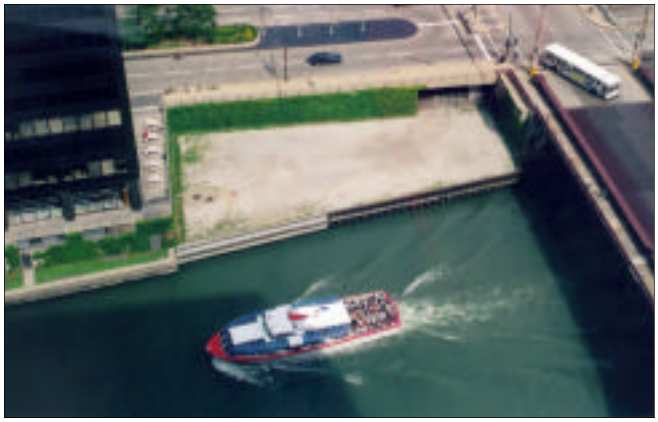
Habitat & Landscaping:
- Plant shade and ornamental trees and low-lying shrubbery in the seating area.

Economic Development:
- Explore the development of food concessions.

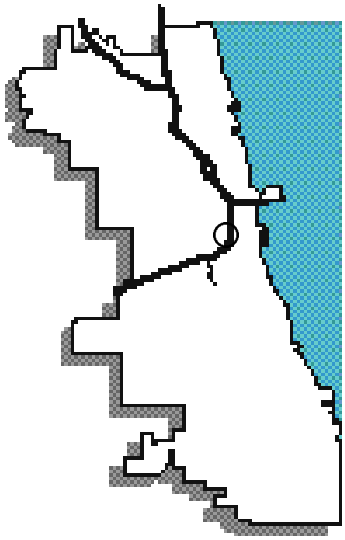


Rush Street Park Improvements

300 South Wacker



Site conditions



Three distinct activity areas are planned for this site. At the street level, seating and landscaping are featured in the widened sidewalk and paved plaza. The amphitheater below is intended as both a performance space and a casual seating area. Finally, visitors would have access to a dock-level esplanade from which to view river traffic.

Proposed Improvements

River Access:

- Provide curved terraced seating with adequate lighting.
- Build a staircase to the dock-level esplanade.
- Create a river taxi dock.

Habitat & Landscaping:

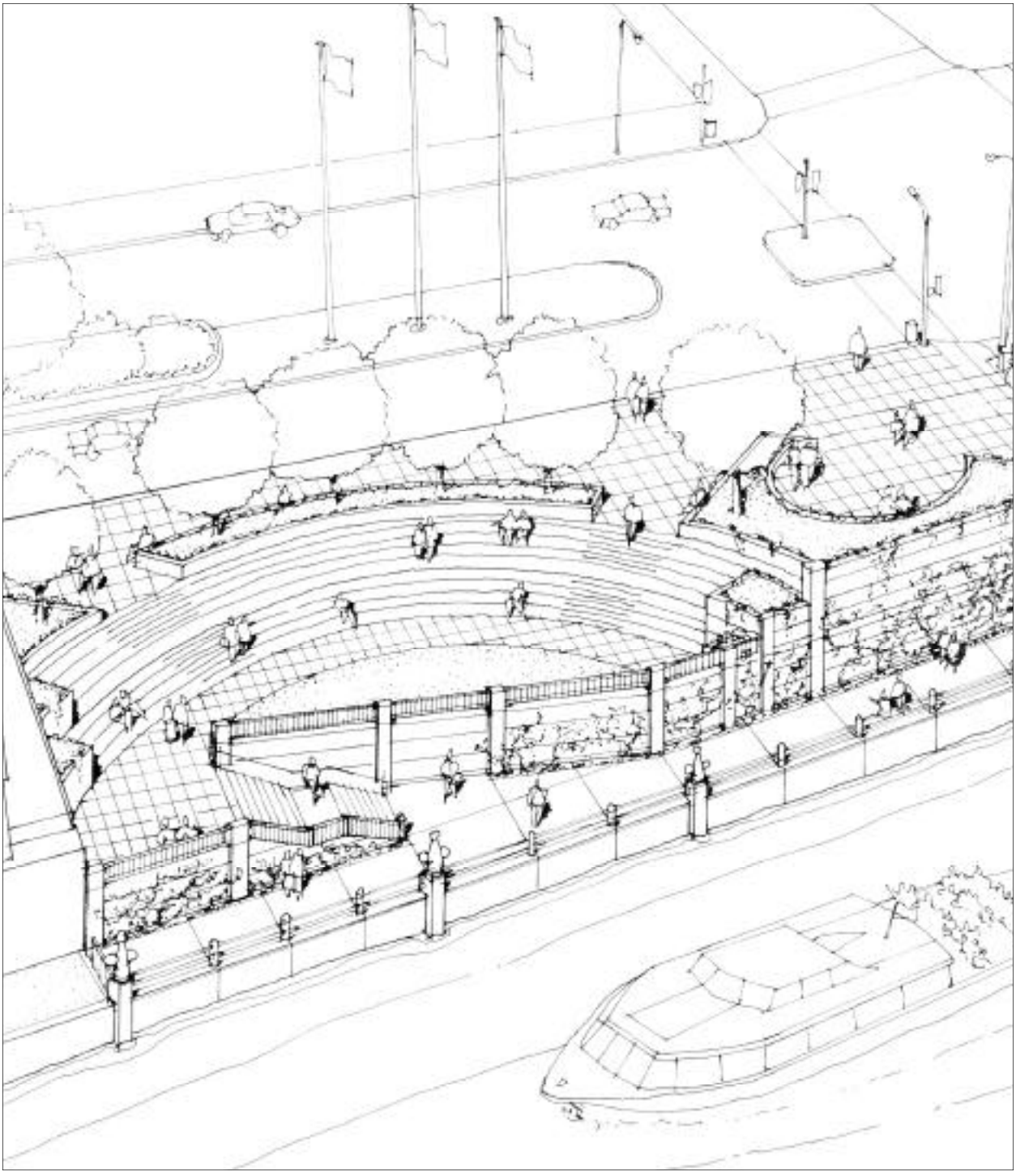
- Plant ornamental and shade trees on the upper level.
- Plant shrubs and vines along lower-level retaining walls and terraced planters.

Recreation:

- Create amphitheater suitable for musical and theatrical performances.
- Create an attractive area for passive recreational uses.

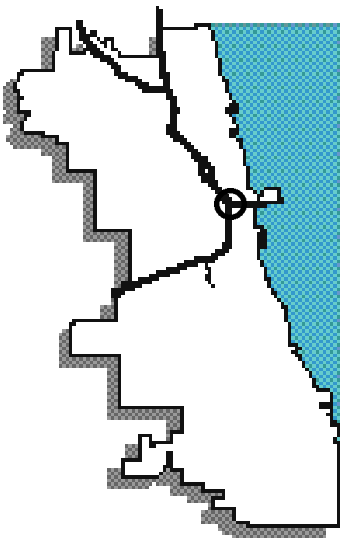
Economic Development:

- Program food concessions on the upper level.
- Program lunch-time and evening performances in the amphitheater.



300 South Wacker

Wolf Point Park



Existing connection under Lake Shore Drive

Proposed Improvements

Recreation:

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Wolf Point Park

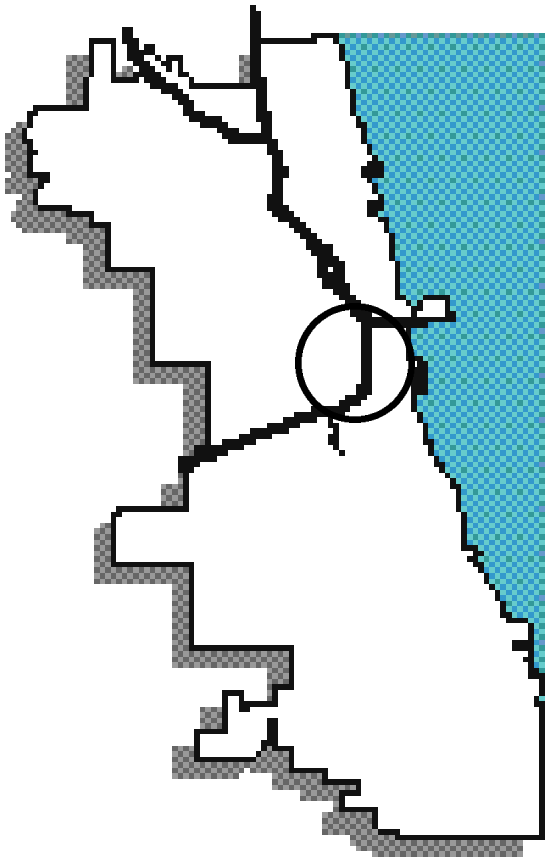
Reach Seven

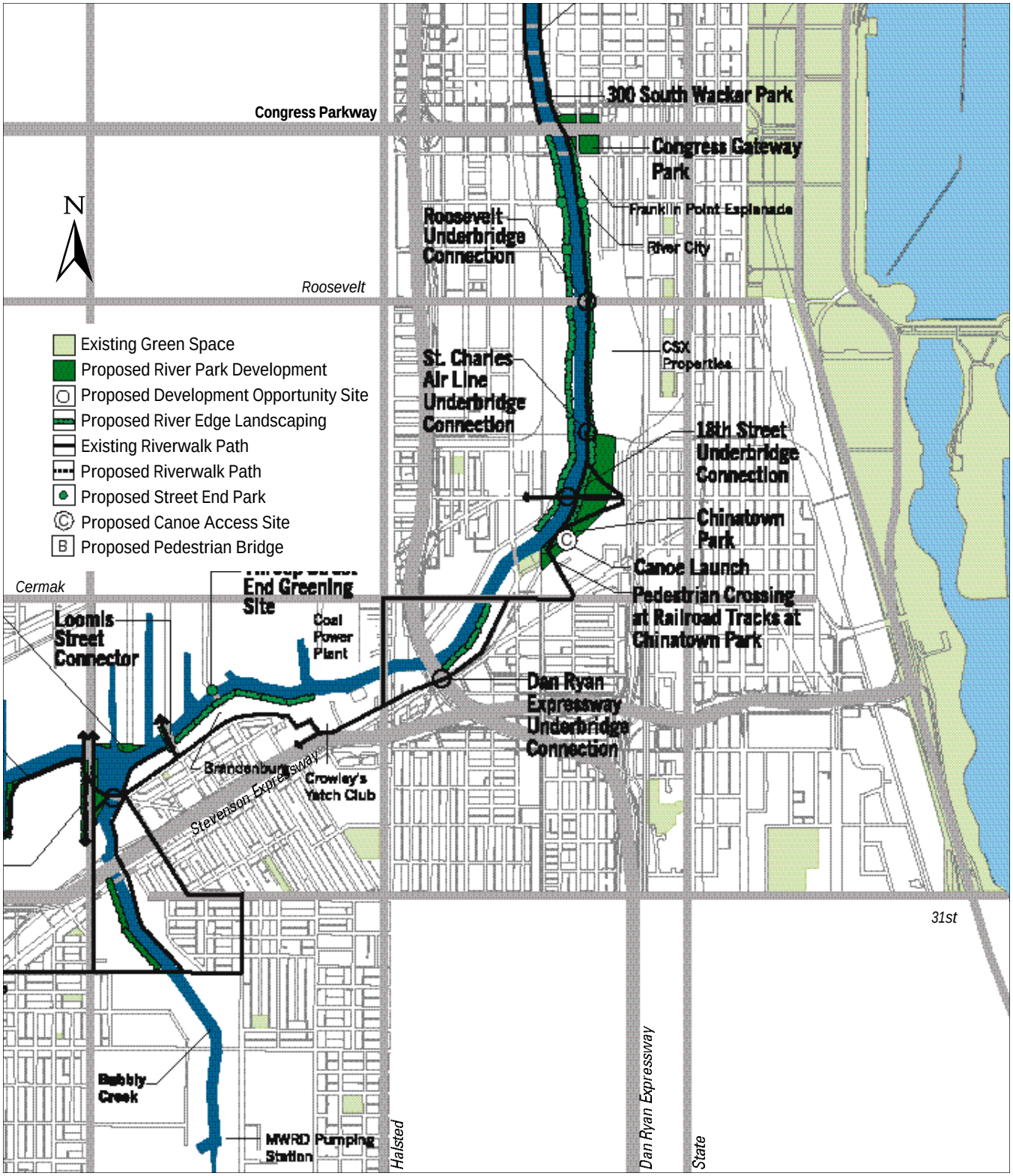
GOALS:
- Increase public access to the river.
- Create additional recreational areas.
- Create a greenway through industrial areas.
- Work with the private sector to complete a greenway on setbacks.

CHARACTERISTICS :
- This reach is dominated by industrial and commercial uses.
- Open space is limited in nearby residential areas.
- Due to the heavy industrial nature of this section, there are no pedestrian paths adjacent to the waterway.

CONSTRAINTS :
- Publicly owned land is limited.
- Barge traffic and industrial uses limit the potential for water-edge development and cantilevered dock construction.
- Soil and groundwater tend to be heavily contaminated.
- Pedestrian and automobile access to the river is poor.

OPPORTUNITIES :
- River access can be included in new development plans.
- Several large parcels of former industrial land are available for redevelopment.
- A proposed extension to the Chicago Riverwalk will provide a connection from downtown to Chinatown.





Reach Seven: South Branch Riverwalk - Congress Parkway to Halsted Avenue

Reach Eight

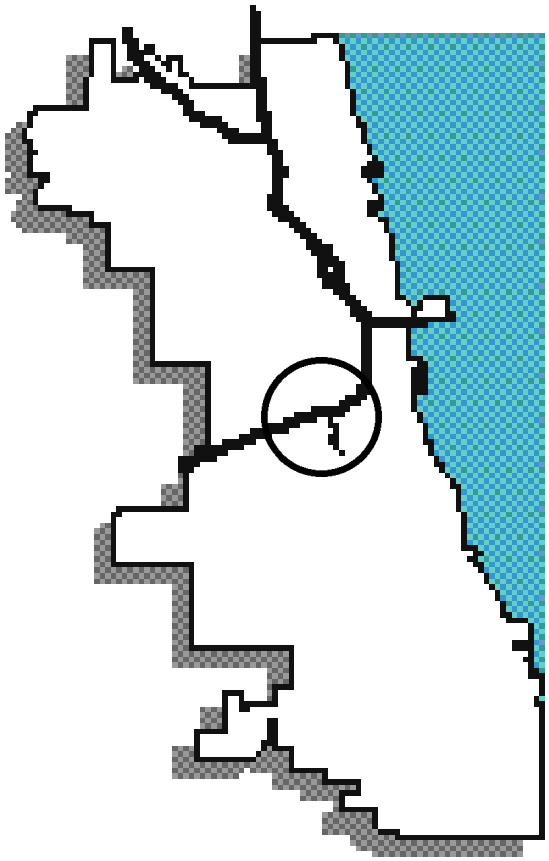
South Branch: Halsted Avenue to Kedzie Avenue

GOALS:
- Increase public access to the river.
- Create additional recreational areas.
- Create a greenway through industrial areas.
- Work with the private sector to complete the greenway on setbacks.

CHARACTERISTICS :
- This reach is dominated by industrial and commercial uses.
- Open space is limited in nearby residential areas.
- Due to the heavy industrial nature of this section, there are no pedestrian paths adjacent to the waterway.

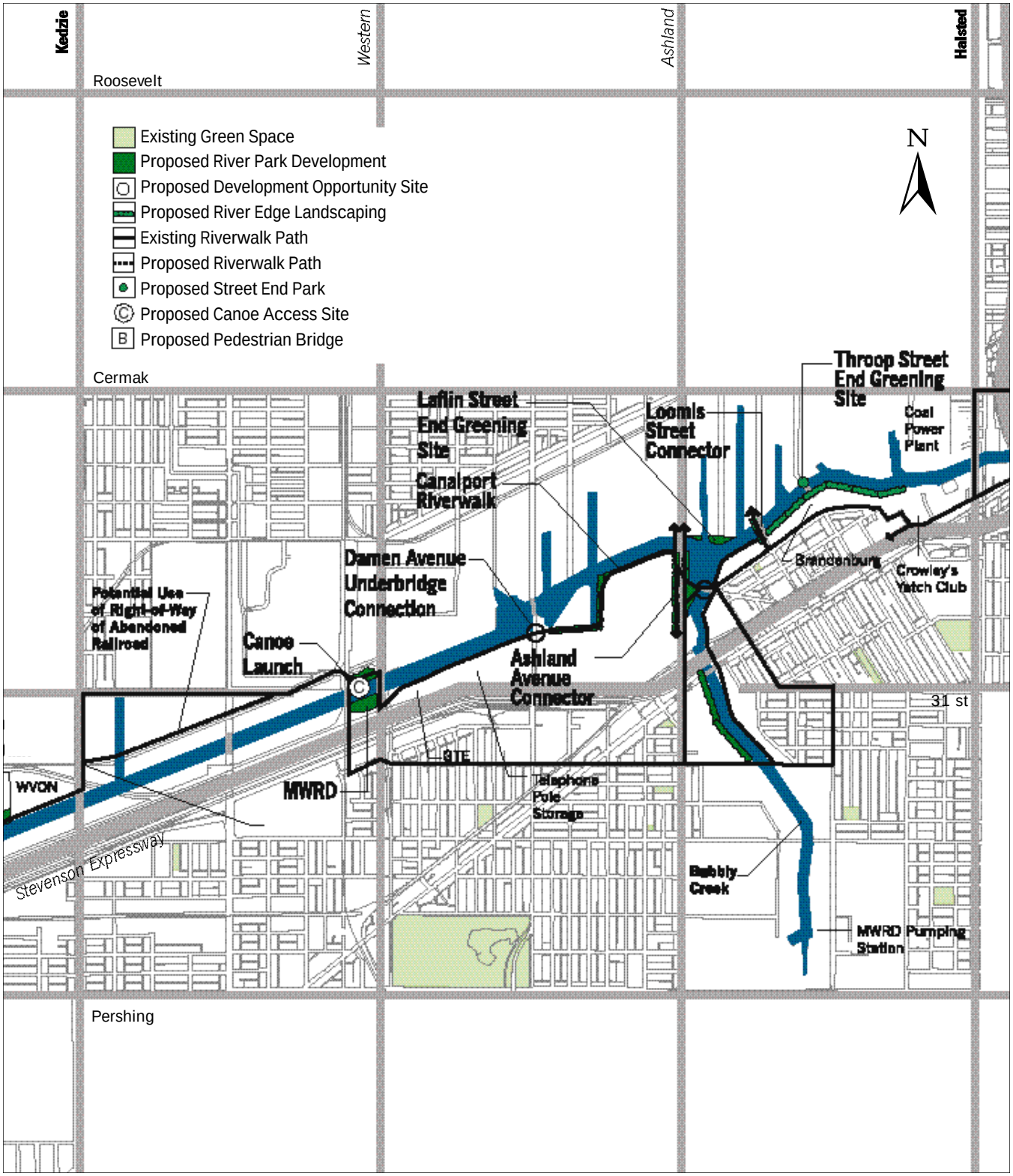
CONSTRAINTS :
- Publicly owned land is limited.
- Land that can be acquired often is heavily contaminated.
- High speed automobile traffic and poor sight lines make the Western Avenue bridge hazardous for pedestrians and cyclists.
- West of Western, access to an alternative river crossing is impeded by the presence of rail lines and the Stevenson Expressway.

OPPORTUNITIES :
- Illinois & Michigan Canal Origins Park is currently being developed by the Chicago Park District.
- An abandoned railroad bridge west of Western Avenue can be redeveloped for use by pedestrians and cyclists.
- Several large parcels of former industrial land are available for redevelopment.
- River access can be included in new development plans.



OPPORTUNITY SITE:

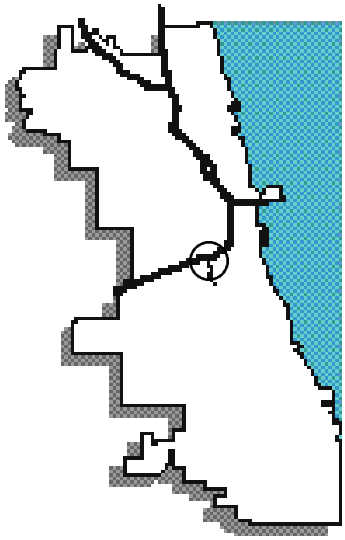
- SOUTH BRANCH TURNING BASIN
- CANALPORT RIVERWALK



Reach Eight: South Branch - Halsted to Kedzie

South Branch Turning Basin

View of Origins Park from the river



The Illinois & Michigan Canal opened in 1848, linking Chicago with the Illinois River at LaSalle/Peru and, ultimately, the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico. The town at its northern terminus, Bridgeport, was the home of packing plants and tanneries. These businesses were clustered along the South Fork of the South Branch of the Chicago River, also known as Bubbly Creek. The I&M Canal soon was made obsolete by the railroads, and water traffic later shifted to the Sanitary and Ship Canal. This historic location is one of the few open space opportunities along the South Branch of the Chicago River and is planned as a major recreational destination. Currently, only the 1.5-acre Canal Origins Park site is publicly owned. Implementation of the plan will require acquisition of additional acreage on the east bank of Bubbly Creek. Riveredge greening on private land is also part of the plan.

Proposed Improvements

Paths:

- Pave and stripe Eleanor Street to accommodate pedestrian and bicycle traffic.
- Link the east and west banks of Bubbly Creek with a pedestrian bridge at Fuller Street.
- Develop a path and improve the streetscape along Ashland Avenue to link with communities to the north and south.
- Create a street crossing at Ashland at the traffic light to link to the proposed Canalport Riverwalk.

River Access:

- Create overlooks with terraces to the water's edge on either end of the pedestrian bridge.
- Add on-street parking on both sides of Ashland Avenue.
- Build a canoe launch in Illinois & Michigan Canal Origins Park at Bubbly Creek.

Habitat & Landscaping:

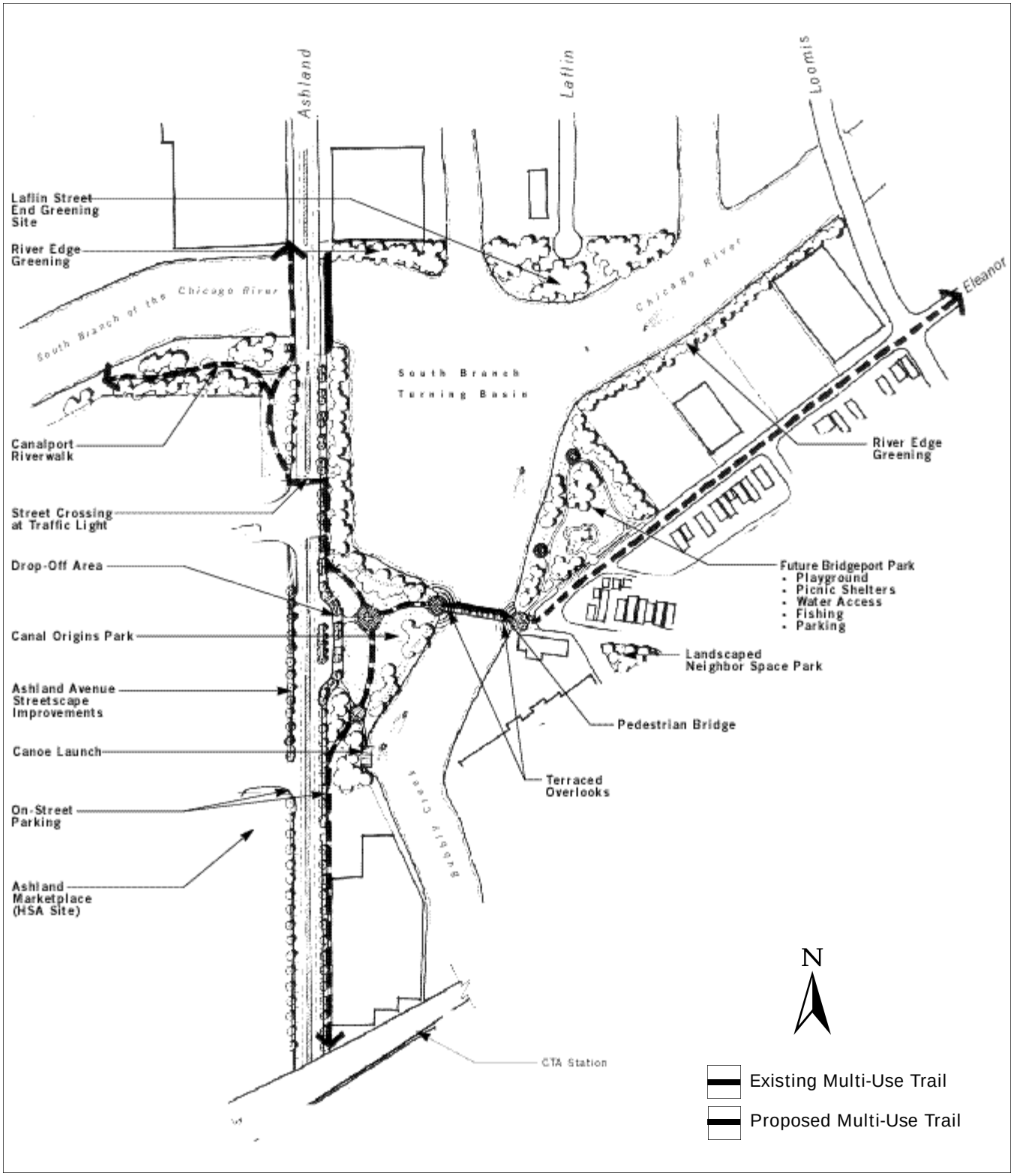
- Improve the aquatic habitat with plants, underwater structures and a sheltered bank.

Recreation:

- Build a canoe launch at Canal Origins Park along Bubbly Creek.
- Create a pull-over and drop-off point for canoes on Ashland Avenue.
- Develop a park on the east bank of the Turning Basin with a playground, picnic shelters, water access, fishing, and parking.
- Develop a landscaped neighborhood open space at Fuller, Hillock and Lock.

Economic Development:

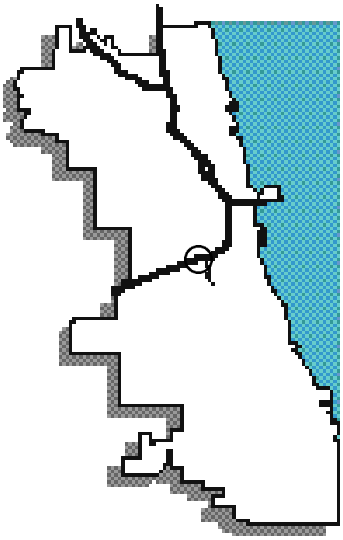
- Explore the potential for canoe rental and food concessions.



South Branch: South Branch Turning Basin

Canalport Riverwalk

Existing river edge along Sun-Times site near Ashland Avenue Bridge



A major riverwalk with overlooks, landscaping and lighting is planned for this site, the future location of the Chicago Sun-Times. It will complement the South Branch Turning Basin site to the east and be connected to it by streetscape improvements along Ashland Avenue. A multi-use path will run south along the Santa Fe Slip, then west to link to a proposed riverwalk extension west of Damen Avenue.

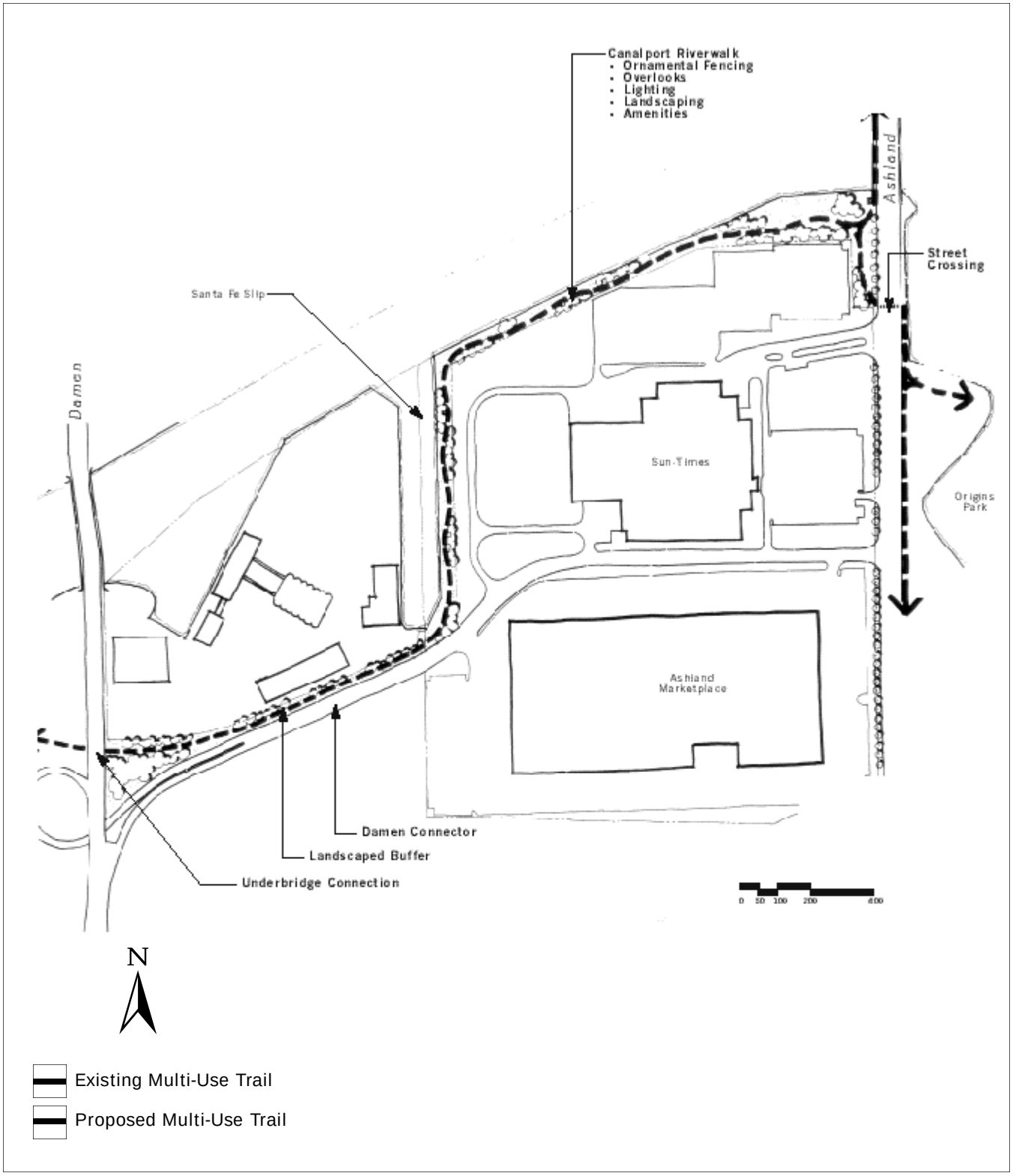
Proposed Improvements

Paths:
- Connect to the South Branch Turning Basin site to the east with a street crossing at the traffic light on Ashland Avenue.
- Improve the sidewalk and streetscape along Ashland Avenue to link with Pilsen and Chinatown to the north and south, respectively.
- Create a half-mile riveredge path south to the Santa Fe Slip, then west to Damen along the improved access road.
- Link to the proposed riverwalk to the west.

River Access:
- Build overlooks with seating along the South Branch and the Santa Fe Slip.
- Create areas for bank fishing.

Habitat & Landscaping:
- Install water-edge landscaping.

Recreation:
- Create a half-mile riveredge path south to the Santa Fe Slip, then west to Damen along the improved truck access road.
- Create a multi-use path connecting to Canal Origins Park to the east.



South Branch: Canalport Riverwalk

Reach Nine

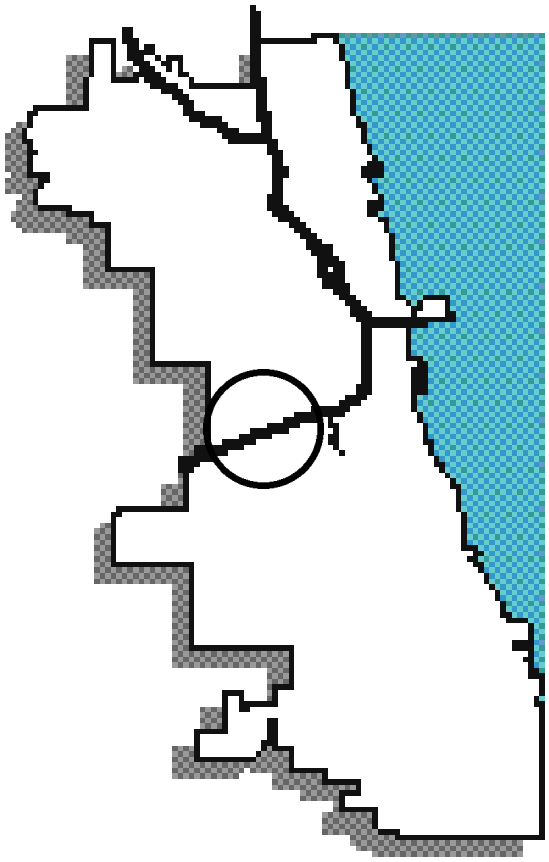
Sanitary & Ship Canal: California Avenue to City Limits

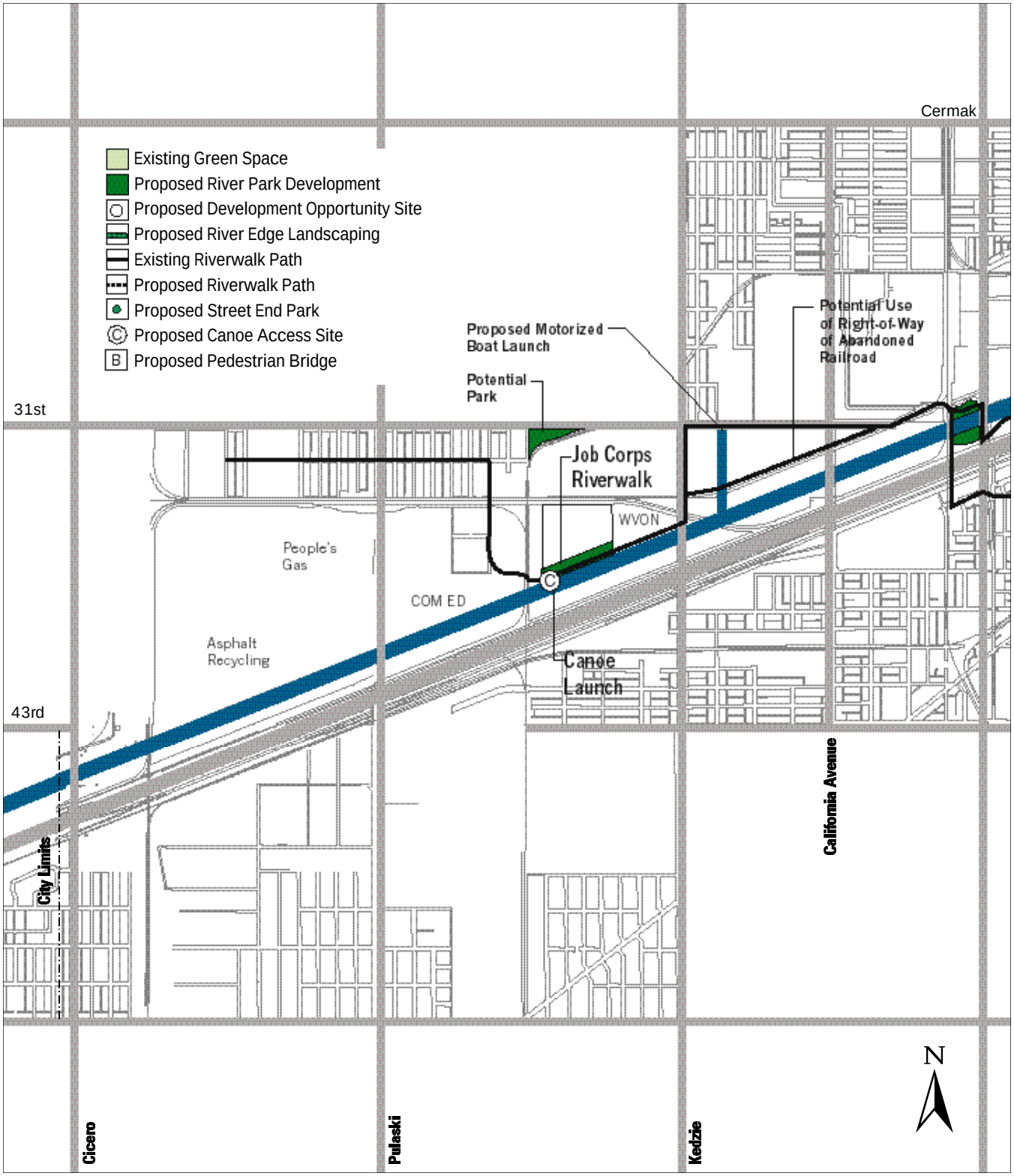
GOALS:
- Increase public access to the canal.
- Create additional recreational areas.
- Create a greenway through industrial areas.
- Work with the private sector to complete the greenway on setbacks.

CHARACTERISTICS :
- This reach is dominated by industrial and commercial uses.
- Open space is limited in nearby residential areas.
- Nearly all canal-edge land is owned by MWRD, but the majority is leased to industrial users.
- Due to the heavy industrial nature of this section, there are no pedestrian paths adjacent to the waterway.

CONSTRAINTS :
- Soil and groundwater tend to be heavily contaminated.
- Steep banks are hazardous and limit access.
- Heavy barge traffic limits recreational boating.

OPPORTUNITIES :
- Links can be made to the I&M Canal Bike Trail, the Lockport Historic Trail and the planned Centennial Trail.





Reach Nine: Sanitary & Ship Canal - California Avenue to City Limits

Chapter Three: Implementation Strategies

Overview

The Chicago River Corridor Development Plan will require the support of numerous government agencies and other organizations to implement. Fortunately, there are also numerous existing and potential tools that these groups can use. They include regulatory tools, such as the setback ordinance and the design guidelines. They also include financial resources, general revenues as well as TIF and Empowerment Zone funds. The broad range of government agencies involved in the ownership and management of the river presents an opportunity. Each partner agency can incorporate key pieces into its mission and capital plan and coordinate grant requests in complementary ways.

Setback Ordinance

On April 21, 1998, the Chicago City Council amended the Chicago Zoning Ordinance adding guidelines for planned developments along the Chicago River. The amendment requires a 30-foot setback from the top of the bank landscaped with plants that enhance the riparian environment. It also requires that all new development within 100 feet of the river, with certain exceptions, comply with the City's adopted design guidelines. Further, a definition of "top of the bank" is provided.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO

SECTION 1.
Title 17 of the Municipal Code of Chicago, the Chicago Zoning Ordinance, is hereby amended in Section 11.11-1(n) by deleting the language in brackets and adding the underscored language as follows:

(n) The development of land with any building, structure, or parking area, where any portion of the land is located within 100 feet of any waterway, shall be permitted only when processed as a planned development subject to the provisions herein; provided, however, that the repair or rehabilitation of any portion of an existing building, structure or parking area shall be exempt from this requirement. Additionally, outside the area bounded by Chicago Avenue, Lake Michigan, Cermak Road and Halsted Street, the following shall [also] be exempt from this requirement; (i) residential structures containing three or fewer dwelling units and structures which are accessory or additions thereto; and (ii) other buildings, structures or parking areas which are accessory or an addition to an existing building, structure or use and are either 500 square feet or less in enclosed floor area or are set back a minimum of 30 feet from the [waterway] top of the bank. For purposes of this section, top of the bank means the slope adjacent to the water's edge and that point at the top of the slope at which the contour of the slope ceases to be 10% or more.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, such exempt development may be considered for a planned development upon application subject to the provisions herein. The waterways subject to this provision shall include: Chicago River Main Branch, Chicago River North Branch and North Branch Canal, Chicago River South Branch and South Fork of the South Branch, North Shore Channel, Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, Calumet River and Lake Calumet, Little Calumet River, Grand Calumet

River, Wolf Lake, and Des Plaines River. [Measurements] Measurement of the 100 foot distance shall be made from the high water mark boundary of the waterway along an axis generally perpendicular to the waterway.
The provisions of Sections 11.11-1(o) and (p) hereof shall not be applicable to this Section 11.1(n). (Amend. Coun.J. 7-29-92, p.20476.)

SECTION 2.
Title 17 of the Municipal Code of Chicago, the Chicago Zoning Ordinance, is hereby amended in Section 11.11-2(l) by addition the underscored language as follows:

11.11-2 Guidelines.
In reviewing an application for planned development filed pursuant to Section 11.11-3, the Commissioner of Planning and Development, the Chicago Plan Commission and the City Council shall give consideration to the following guidelines:

(l) The beauty, amenity, economic potential, recreation value and environmental quality of Chicago's waterways should be protected and enhanced by developing more attractive relationships between land and water. In the development of land adjacent to waterways, a planned development should:

(1) Provide public waterfront paths, plazas, overlooks, esplanades and access points where appropriate.
(2) Include provisions for landward connections to maintain continuity and linkage with nearby public edge improvements at locations of active commercial/industrial waterfront activities.
(3) Provide adequate setbacks for bulk storage facilities to prevent littering or leaching of pollutants into the waterways.
(4) Include stabilizing treatments for waterway edges with landscaping screening for visual relief and safety provisions for landslide and waterside users.
(5) Provide boat landings and/or water oriented commercial facilities where appropriate and feasible.
(6) Provide a minimum setback of thirty (30) feet from the top of the bank along all points of the waterway. For purposes of this section, top of the bank means the slope adjacent to the water's edge and that point at the top of the slope at which the contour of the slope ceases to be 10% or more. All setback areas shall be landscaped with trees and vegetation which shall be compatible with and enhance the riparian environment. This minimum setback applies to the following waterways: Chicago River Main Branch, Chicago River North Branch and North Branch Canal, Chicago River South Branch and South Fork of the South Branch, North Shore Channel, Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal.
(7) Comply with the general goals set forth in the Chicago River Urban Design Guidelines - Downtown Corridor, and any other inland waterways design guidelines adopted by the Chicago Plan Commission.

SECTION 3.
This ordinance shall be in force and effect from and after its passage and due publication.

Design Guidelines

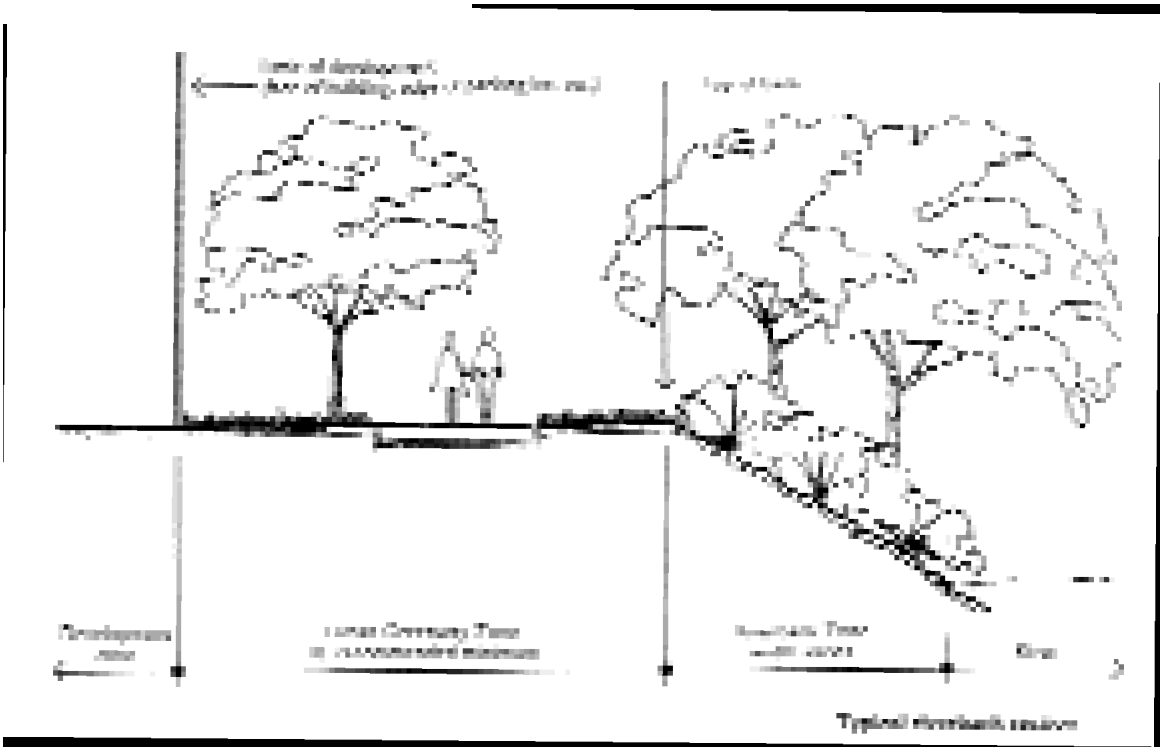
Design guidelines are used to ensure development that is compatible, both with nearby development and with its environment. The Design Guidelines component of the Chicago River Corridor Development Plan and Design Guidelines uses text and images to stimulate development that is harmonious both with its surroundings and the goals of the Plan outlined in the introduction. The Guidelines address all proposed improvements, including landscaping, new or rehabilitated structures, paving, lighting, furnishings and signage. Also included are "plant palettes," recommendations of flowers, shrubs and trees appropriate for different areas of the river. The Guidelines will be used by the Chicago Department of Planning and Development and other units of government in their review of all proposed improvements along the river.

These guidelines are intended to be comprehensive, to address all redevelopment and new development in all areas adjacent to the Chicago River. Where a proposed activity or area is not addressed by the guidelines, the underlying principles of these guidelines will be used to develop project-specific guidelines.

River Development Zones

Land along the river can be divided into three zones, or areas, as follows:

- Riverbank Zone
- Urban Greenway Zone
- Development Zone



Riverbank Zone

The Riverbank Zone is the area adjacent to the river between the water's edge and the top of the bank, where a bank exists. Where there is a vertical bulkhead or other engineered vertical structure there is no riverbank zone. In general, this area should not be developed or disturbed except for environmental restoration and landscaping, so that it can act as a buffer between the river and adjacent uses and can enhance the "green" aspects of the continuous greenway corridor.

Urban Greenway Zone

The Urban Greenway Zone is the area between the top of the bank or face of the vertical bulkhead and the setback line furthest from the river and

the top of the bank. This zone is, in general, either a landscaped area with passive uses, or an area which accommodates the continuous multi-use path and/or other recreational uses. Therefore, it is characterized by more active uses than the Riverbank Zone. The Urban Greenway Zone will not be developed with commercial, residential, institutional or other uses, although limited accessory uses are permitted within this area.

Development Zone

The Development Zone is, in general, the area where renovation, redevelopment, or new development will occur. Such development may be commercial, residential, institutional, or any other use permitted by the zoning for the site.

Capital Improvement Program

The Chicago River Corridor Development Plan and Urban Design Guidelines identifies 22 "opportunity sites," projects along the river where specific types of public investment are proposed. Development of these sites will require a ten-year investment strategy involving commitments from many different agencies using many different funding sources. To prepare a final budget and funding strategy, the Steering Committee proposed the
following steps be undertaken in the implementation phase:

- Project Prioritization
- Final Cost Estimation
- Funding Coordination

Project Prioritization

The Steering Committee prepared the following list of criteria with which to rank the proposed projects in order of priority:

- The project forms links between existing facilities, as in a key section of path or greenway where none currently exists.
- It is part of a cluster of projects and its construction would enhance the value of the cluster.
- The project is highly visible, with the potential to greatly improve the area's aesthetic value when seen from the land or the river.
- It has the potential to be heavily used, resulting in a high ratio of benefits to costs.
- It fills an unmet need, providing a use otherwise unavailable in a neighboring community or else where on the river.
- It contributes to a geographically balanced distribution of a particular use along the river, allowing access by the greatest number of users.
- Significant partnerships exist to support project funding, maintenance, and operations.
- Local community leadership and support for the project is strong.
- It is "do-able," with few barriers to timely completion.

Final Cost Estimation

Priority projects will next go through an engineering phase. Detailed construction drawings will be developed, allowing for precise estimation of project costs. These cost estimates will be analyzed and refined by a design review team composed of representatives of key agencies whose missions include responsibility for some aspect of river maintenance and operations,
including the Chicago Department of Planning and Development, the Chicago Department of Transportation, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District, the Chicago Park District, the Forest Preserve District of Cook County, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Funding Coordination

Financial commitments will be sought from each of the key agencies mentioned above. These commitments will form a coordinated ten-year capital budget.

Each of these agencies draws from a number of funding sources in addition to their general funds: (DPD will map the relevant development geographies along the river)

- Foundation and governments grants
- Municipal bonds
- Tax increment financing revenues
- Federal Community Development Block Grants
- Federal Empowerment Zone funds

Environmental Recommendations

The Chicago River Corridor Development Plan seeks a balance between the demands of human users of the Chicago River and the natural environment. With this in mind, the plan's Steering Committee identified a need for a set of guiding objectives for stewardship of the natural environment within the river corridor. The Steering Committee formed an Environmental Subcommittee to develop these objectives.

The Environmental Subcommittee's recommendations are contained in the following *Environmental Action Agenda*. This Action Agenda relates to the activities of numerous non-profit and public agencies whose missions include river stewardship and education. It is divided into two sub-areas: Management Activities and Design Guideline Recommendations.

Management Activities

The following guiding objectives are accompanied by actions that the City of Chicago will pursue in partnership with other government agencies, non-profit environmental and civic organizations, and the private sector. Where appropriate, monitoring and evaluation should be incorporated to continuously fine tune protection efforts.

Objective 1: Create, Restore and Manage Riveredge Buffers

A. Description

A buffer is a natural area immediately adjacent to a waterbody where development is restricted to stabilize river banks, provide habitat for fish and aquatic life, protect water quality, and provide a visually appealing screen. A riveredge buffer complements riveredge setback requirements , such as those set forth in the City of Chicago Setback Ordinance. While the setback is measured from the top of the bank, the buffer is measured from the river's edge and extends a limited distance into the setback.

B. Actions

1. Encourage landowners to protect and restore riveredge buffers along the river.
2. Encourage landowners to remove engineered edges, particularly where seawalls need repair or have failed, and create naturalized banks.
3. Encourage landowners to manage stream buffers by removing undesirable, non-native plant species and planting recommended riparian species.
4. Market and distribute the "Native Plant Guide for Streams and Stormwater Facilities in Northeastern Illinois."
5. Identify and restore natural areas or green corridors that support sensitive habitats.
6. Develop a land acquisition strategy and easement program to link discontinuous green corridors.

Objective 2: Restore and Enhance River Banks

A. Description :

To control streambank erosion and deterioration of existing bulkheads, and to restore the River's natural character over the long run, land owners should be encouraged to restore and enhance naturalized banks. Potential projects include reshaping eroded areas, installing fish habitat structures, establishing permanent native vegetation, and in some areas using rock, geogrids, fiber rolls, live fascines, cribwalls and other soil stabilizing structures. River bank restoration should conform with appropriate permitting and regulations.

B. Actions

1. Inventory severely eroded sites.
2. Encourage alternatives to sheet piling and other conventional bank stabilization methods.
3. Identify demonstration sites to test alternative methods, Monitor and evaluate their effectiveness once implemented.
4. Create incentives for owners to remove bulkheads and regrade overly-steep slopes to restore banks to a naturalized state.
5. Encourage planting of native riparian plants within the river bank zone.
6. Develop programs to coordinate efforts and assist with bank restoration.
7. Train and develop personnel within government agencies to restore and maintain river banks.

OBJECTIVE 3:
CREATE, RESTORE, PROTECT AND ENHANCE WETLAND, RIPARIAN, AND AQUATIC HABITATS

A. DESCRIPTION:
Wetland, riparian and aquatic habitats have been severely degraded over the years by unwise or single-purpose development. The cumulative result of these impacts is often a reduction of ecological functions. Policies are needed that provide self-sustaining levels of wetland, aquatic and riparian biodiversity; requirements for identification and protection of the remaining healthy habitats; and restoration or naturalization of these habitats. Policies must also be developed that integrate wetland, aquatic, and riparian protection, restoration and naturalization with local economic benefits and community revitalization.

B. ACTIONS
1. Create new wetlands where feasible.
2. Identify appropriate sites for instream habitat and vegetation to support fish and aquatic life.
3. Restock fish and develop management plans.
4. Identify sites to develop as wildlife sanctuaries.
5. Encourage the use of native plant species as recommended in the plant palette included in the Design Guidelines.
6. Conduct a comprehensive study of riparian and aquatic wildlife and habitat conditions to complement existing studies.

OBJECTIVE 4:
IMPROVE AND PROTECT WATER QUALITY

A. DESCRIPTION:
Federal, state and local efforts have greatly reduced water pollution in the Chicago River, making the river an attractive resource to humans and wildlife. Continued improvement in water quality will enhance the aquatic and riparian wildlife and habitats, development opportunities and recreational uses.

B. ACTIONS
1. Review stormwater management practices and develop policies and regulations to encourage or require best management practices such as swales, biofilters, filter strips and detention basins. Encourage stormwater retrofitting to reduce runoff into the sewer system and the river.
2. Develop soil erosion and sediment control policies and regulations for riverfront developments, following NIPC model ordinances and procedures in the Illinois Green and Blue Books.
3. Based on the results of monitoring, identify measures to improve water quality in river reaches not achieving state water quality standards.
4. Develop an interagency strategy to improve water quality to reach the State's fishable and swimmable "general use" designation.

OBJECTIVE 5:
ESTABLISH RIVER CORRIDOR EDUCATION AND MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

A. DESCRIPTION:
Education and management programs are necessary to maintain the benefits accomplished through this Action Agenda. Such programs can be useful for coordinating many of the efforts underway to protect the river. Educational programs in particular will play a key role in raising the awareness by landowners and the public of the river's many resources. Additionally, a system-wide management program will allow diverse initiatives to occur in a coordinated manner. As a first step in establishing a management program, joint funding can be sought from the private and public sectors to assess and map existing conditions. Problem areas should be prioritized and conditions tracked.

B. ACTIONS
1. Prepare and periodically map river corridor environmental features (bank conditions, habitat, water levels and quality, monitoring stations, etc.) and problem areas.
2. Support volunteer monitoring and tracking of riparian and aquatic habitat and wildlife, and water quality.
3. Increase awareness and protection of natural features along the river corridor with informational signage.
4. Develop public education programs and brochures.
5. Develop information packages for developers and landowners.
6. Periodically evaluate environmental conditions and modify management programs as appropriate.
7. Support and encourage community stewardship.

ENVIRONMENTAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Developments should create, restore and protect environmental buffers along the river in order to stabilize river banks, provide habitat for fish and aquatic life, protect water quality, and provide an appealing naturalistic river edge.

   a. The buffer should extend from the river's edge (normal water line) to a point five feet beyond the top-of-bank.

   b. Where the width of the riverbank zone is less than 20 feet, the buffer should extend an additional distance into the urban greenway zone, or setback, so that the total width of the buffer is 25 feet. However, in no case is it required that the buffer extend more than 15 feet into the urban greenway zone, or setback.

   c. While there is a strong preference to locate the buffer entirely along the river's edge, on some sites there may exist conditions (such as a building, a wall, or a conflicting land use) that would compel the location of a public access trail away from the outside edge of the setback and toward the river. Under these circumstances, flexibility should be provided to allow part of the environmental buffer to be located along the outside of the trail and away from the river. However, in no case should a paved trail or its landscaped shoulder extend closer than five feet to the top of the bank.

2. The buffer is to be managed as a natural area, utilizing native riparian vegetation and avoiding incompatible structures.

   a. In order to minimize maintenance needs, provide effective stabilization of the riverbanks, and meet the other environmental and aesthetic objectives of this policy, native vegetation adapted to the riparian zone should be utilized for landscaping purposes. The recommended reference for native riparian plants is the "Native Plant Guide for Streams and Stormwater Facilities in Northeastern Illinois."

   b. To preserve the stability and environmental integrity of the buffer, structures (including paved pathways) generally should not be located within the buffer, except as allowed in paragraph 1c above. Structures necessary to accommodate river-dependent uses are exempt from the buffer recommendations. In order to provide an appropriate balance between environmental needs and access to the river for recreation and viewing, structures such as benches and fishing platforms may be allowed within the buffer on a limited basis.

3. Where existing conditions do not conform to these buffer policies, landowners are encouraged to restore buffer features consistent with these policies.

   a. Landowners are encouraged to manage vegetation in the buffer by removing undesirable, non-native plant species and replanting recommended riparian species as identified in the "Native Plant Guide for Streams and Stormwater Facilities in Northeastern Illinois."

   b. Landowners also are encouraged to remove structures such as bulkheads and to regrade overly-steep slopes, consistent with the aquatic habitat and other environmental objectives of this policy. Such actions should be consistent with sound engineering principles and conform to appropriate permitting requirements, especially under the Harbor and Floodplain Ordinances.

Public/Private River Development Corporation

As a complement to the activities of the existing government agencies and non-profits, the Department of Planning and Development will explore the creation of a Chicago River Development Corporation. The corporation's mission would be to encourage and promote improvements adjacent to the Chicago River that are compatible with the goals of the Chicago River Corridor Development Plan and Urban Design Guidelines. The corporation would be structured as a delegate agency to the City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development to assist in the implementation of the plan in the following ways:

- market the plan to businesses adjacent to the river
- establish "riverscape associations" for each of the nine reaches to raise funds and encourage participation in riverfront improvement efforts
- assist existing businesses and new developers in designing riveredge improvements that are compatible with the plan
- administer public programs to fund of private improvements
- be structured as a 501 c(3) non-profit corporation
- be governed by a board of directors that includes a business representative from each of the nine reaches as well as representatives of government and non-profits
- be managed by an executive director

Acknowledgements

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